THE COMMONWEAL

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THE BIRDS OF THE FIELD

THERE is a prediction that business will soon thrive on the western coast of Florida, which means that a goodly number of those who meandered southward before hurricanes seemed an immediate possibility are going to migrate again. However that may be, the wanderings of the American citizen may really be likened to a migration—to an ebb and flow governed by rules inherent in industrialized society, by opportunities of pasturage and climate. If the thing continues, all hope for a definite culture, as distinguished from a standardized polish, must disappear. Even the Hebrew mind, firm during thousands of years against the impact of environment, is not resisting the current of American modernity. It, too, is picking up ideas in the easy, chaotic fashion characteristic of men when they fail to sit down together for a long while and think in their own way. The abrasion of tradition is inevitable under the circumstances, because tradition is cumbersome baggage to people who must at all costs acclimatize themselves rapidly. The fad of the recipe and the "symbol" as opposed to a doctrinal heritage is always a sign that the race is traveling at random. A vendor does not carry dinners of substantial dimensions through the aisles of a crowded train. He serves sandwiches. And therefore the real danger of our era is not that it is becoming more immoral or violent than other eras. The real danger is an appalling shallowness manifested in numerous ways.

Is there not a great deal of truth in what Oswald Spengler seems to imply—that culture is the fruit of a humanity deeply rooted in the soil? These roots do at least guarantee stability. They make it possible to realize the seasonal variety of the earth, to formulate the heritage of custom and belief, to hoard the strength of family blood. One of our great American difficulties, at any rate, is the rapid depopulation and incidental drying-up of regionalized society. When men and women are constantly eddying round a few centres of economic attraction, it is impossible to deal with them properly in literature. They do not stand still long enough to have their pictures taken. It is something of a shock to realize that all our best fiction and poetry is a record of dessication. Our New England story-tellers offer dark little albums filled with portraits of spiritual anaemia. And though one middle-western poet has been brave enough to praise Chicago, his fellows have all been shouting about churchyards and villages even more ghastly. All this in a new land—in a country which seemed to

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Emerson like a young Mercury with endless areas for its playground! If you trusted these books, there would be no way out of believing that the prairie is, humanly speaking, more weary than the Campagna. The shocks that come to romantically minded pilgrims to Acadian Louisiana, or the plantation South, are among the most desolating of experiences.

We said some of these things recently to a very competent observer of Iowa farm life. He answered rather hopefully that the people destined finally to take over the land and till it have not yet arrived. There was a generation which rushed here anxious for wealth and opportunity, determined and almost dizzily eager to rifle the virgin treasure of the continent. These people were pioneers but they were also strangers—to the soil, to one another. Sometimes they managed to form something like a community, but the times were against them and their heart was really with their own business. Next there followed a generation which consumed the profits that had been amassed and moved on in their turn, driven by the same dream of virgin treasure. Always it was "opportunity" that beckoned. For the sake of this education was coveted, business ventures were planned, migration was undertaken. The boy of an Iowa farmer became a bank president, a congressman, a lawyer. But when he lived up to his mother's fondest hopes, he never became an Iowa farmer. And therefore little by little the problem of the country has grown into not merely a serious economic and financial difficulty, but also into a vast and apparently baffling human difficulty with which those concerned do not know how to deal. Little by little, declared our informant hopefully, these will be superseded by a generation in whose hands the land will finally remain.

But one wonders if any progress has really been made toward the solution of this basic problem. It is not, as everybody can see, merely a question of farming and raising hogs. To some extent it concerns the whole business of holding property, and to some extent also surely it affects the nature of all human society and cultural effort. The middle-ages had made one disposition of the matter, but out of the repudiation of this the modern world grew. In Dom Bede Jarrett's Social Theories of the Middle Ages, a brilliant new book which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue of The Commonweal, there is a discussion of the problem of land from which we should like to quote a little.

"The English peasant—and his example was followed everywhere else in greater or less degree—in gaining his liberty lost his land. The landless man was an exception in mediaeval society; the earlier the society the more exceptional was he; yet the freeman was as rare as the landless man, while the man in whose power it was to leave his holding and his lord and his trade was only the landless man and no other. Even the free tenants were in practice tethered to the soil. Land, because of the demand for service made upon its holders as a condition for holding it, meant a loss of personal freedom to whomsoever it belonged. It owned the men and not they it. To be free in your choice of dwelling meant only to be dispossessed of dwelling. You were a traveler in the world, and to travel well you must travel lightly; you must jettison your cargo to ride free in the storm. It was an age in which you were perpetually faced with the cut-throat menace: 'Stand and deliver. Your land or your freedom.' The surrender of one or the other was essential to your life. Thus under the stress of the peasant revolt the lord became a landlord; and the result of the first great strike was to dispossess the strikers of what they had in order that they might gain what they lacked. Competition came to stay in the place of custom; freedom of work and opportunity was granted in place of fixed and regulated service; absolute ownership was substituted for conditional ownership, but was narrowed to a very few. All the ranks of society had once owned more land, but none without doing service for it; now the majority lost their land in exchange for money, and those few into whose hands it came did less service for it, or less obvious service. The majority forgot that they had surrendered it, the few forgot they had not always owned it. Labor of its own free will forced the lord to take over from it all its land. Labor was the prodigal who demanded cash down for the portion of his inheritance that he might go into the far country of freedom."

Here is outlined succinctly an historical event which seems absolutely basic to any understanding of our time. A recent English critic has pointed out the peculiar fact that while all the Romantics were singing enthusiastically of life "close to nature," the people who listened and applauded were running farther and farther away from nature. He argues that they didn't really want it. But perhaps it would be more correct to say that the trouble came from the simultaneous Romantic emphasis upon freedom. The old order had been virtually property communism based on service; the new was the holding of property to avoid service and be untrammeled. It may be that mankind will never go back, urged as it is by the disillusionment of centuries. It may be that the future rests rather upon the gradual change of the industrial system itself into something like the mediaeval land system. This is what the great businesses of today, with their insistence upon "welfare organization" and shareholding seem to be struggling for. But surely we must have learned enough from time to realize that forcing industrialism upon societies, civilizations, where the agricultural community still exists and prospers is not entirely a good thing. If, for instance, there is to be a race between us and the Orient, it may well be a race backward. In the long run, birds who are properly of the field tire of the effort to fly.

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WEEK BY WEEK

RUMORS of a new Locarno conference, as reported chiefly by the New York Herald Tribune, are hopeful and may be credited. The veteran Briand will certainly do everything in his power to make it a reality, and there is little doubt that Britain will second his efforts. While the comparative failure of all attempts to settle the armament problem may prove a subject for discussion, the chief concern of the conference would probably lie elsewhere. In the first place, Mussolini has undoubtedly succeeded in fulfilling one aim of the modern Italian foreign policy—an aim which, one may safely say, is not belligerent or even imperialistic in the strict sense, but political in so far as it means the firm establishment of Italy as one of the greatest European powers. What could Fascism gain by war? Its whole purpose has been the reconstruction of Italy on a firm economic and nationalistic basis. This purpose would be greatly endangered, if not entirely crushed, by any attempt at military action. At present, Mussolini being courted by France and commanding the destinies of southeastern Europe, is precisely the kind of figure Fascism desires. The settlement of difficulties attendant upon this position ought not to be difficult. In the background, of course, hover larger and more ominous problems bound up with the Orient. The reader of recent French jeremiads on the theme of Islam will have no doubt about what will weigh heavily on M. Briand's mind when he goes to Locarno again—if he does. The situation in colonial Africa, for instance, is nothing short of ominous.

RELATIONS between the United States government and Mexico have arrived at such a point of danger that it is difficult to comment upon them. It is, however, salutary to observe that religious issues are absolutely not in the foreground at present. Secretary Kellogg merely faces the stern problem bequeathed him by the almost unanimous decision of foreign governments to use the Monroe Doctrine as an excuse for letting us go it alone in the settlement of issues created by the Mexican attitude toward foreign property rights. Fundamentally, this attitude is the same toward all property: that is, the Carranza-Obregon-Calles party has acted just as arbitrarily toward titles held by their fellow-citizens and subjects as toward titles held by aliens. Many a Mexican now living in exile or poverty has been stripped of his possessions on the pretext that "reform" demanded confiscation, and with the palliative of reimbursement through "bonds." That is why the present Calles government resents so furiously what it terms "Yankee interference." Nobody else was able to resist the expropriations and reckless graft of their politicians. Will the United States now venture to spoil everything? It is a most serious and delicate situation, in the face of which Mr. Kellogg's compatriots can merely hold their breath and wish him success. The danger of complicating the matter with appeals for the aid of religion should now be obvious to all.

THE formation of a huge trust by joint financiers of Germany and England, whose object, as reported by the London correspondent of the New York Times, is to "fight America" and American industrial combinations in the struggle for world trade, is an interesting development of post-war conditions—all the more so as it neighbors a Washington despatch reporting, on the authority of Secretary Hoover, that living conditions in the United States have now reached a pitch unexampled in the nation's history, as regards wages paid, ratio of unemployment to employment, and volume of trade. That America's prosperity is an object of mingled bewilderment and envy in Europe, has long been evident. That the combinations, which are credited with having produced it, would sooner or later be imitated was a foregone conclusion. Whether the new scale on which European industrialism seems to have decided to work spells prosperity or a deeper degree of servitude for the worker, depends on how far those who are behind it share the ideology which reconciles many of us to the operations of big business in this country.

AMERICAN prosperity, by and large, and taking due note of exceptions which have not escaped the reformer, is built on a theory of diffusion which is really the democratic instinct breaking through the overlay that threatened to submerge it during the

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early days of industrial development. Nothing is so remarkable, as The Commonweal had occasion to remark some weeks ago, as the dismay and distrust with which thoughtful American travelers of a hundred years ago regarded industrialism in Europe and the gloomy prophecies they emitted as to what might happen once it took root in their own country. These evil vaticinations have been largely brought to naught —on the one hand, by a steady determination on the part of the employed to make his work a means of social uplift; and on the other, by a disinclination on the part of the more enlightened employer to consider wages as the element by which price might be reduced when reduction became necessary. Through good times and bad, a wage that spells sheer subsistence has too generally been the rule in Europe. The tendency to regard the worker's earnings as the lowest charge on goods produced, is largely responsible for the attitude of mistrust and antagonism notoriously prevailing there between employers and employed. In America, a certain sensitiveness between the rewards at both ends of the scale has never been lost. It has preserved elasticity and equilibrium. Its maintenance is really the secret of the American worker's tepid attitude toward the Marxian solution. All the strikes, lockouts, and labor warfare of the past twenty years will not disprove a tendency whose results we are watching today; and on the sheer ground of what human nature will consent to, European financiers will be well-advised to study the true nature of the industrial system they are scheduled to fight before adopting one—and only one—of its weapons.

THERE are those who regard a crisis very much as they regard a crater, and who believe, with seismologists, that a regular and not too severe eruption is preferable to a period of quiescence during which suppressed forces are preparing for a major upheaval. Our familiarity with disquieting news from China, however, cannot blind us much longer to the fact that events in the Celestial empire have now approached a point where the entire position of European treaty powers in regard to the Far East is being challenged; and where the expedients that have met each phase of the disturbance till now, will have either to yield to some drastic action, or to be abandoned as violating the law of self-determination laid down eight years ago as the leading principle of post-war settlement. The advance of the Cantonese army from one victory to another; their control from the interior of four treaty-ports, including the capital one of Hankow; and the evidence that national feeling is with them; the denunciation of the treaty with Belgium, which was a rather skilful "ballon d' essai," and which leaves upon the greater powers the onus of admitting that similar treatment is only spared them owing to the force of which they dispose, are all so many signs that a final solution cannot be long delayed.

WERE it not that a new factor exists in the presence of America among the powers concerned, there can be but little doubt as to the manner in which this solution would be applied. A recent article in the London Daily Mail, demanding speedy action from the British government, if only for the sake of preserving a respect for its authority throughout the East, may be taken as a pretty fair sample of how the responsibility is regarded by the European powers. Unfortunately for those who favor harsh, brief, and traditional methods, America is by now one of the great Pacific powers. Her coöperation is an essential to any concerted action that is not to produce further chaos; and this action, there is every reason for believing, can only be secured by evidence that whatever is intended shall not lose sight of the fact that China is a large and homogeneous people with the right of all peoples to work out its own destiny unhampered by any extension of the extra-territorial rights that her weakness in the past forced her to accept. The relations of America with China throughout the past century when her trading flag flew in every Chinese port, form a particularly happy contrast to the force and guile that darken the record of Europe during the same period. They prove that commercial relations of the most ample sort are compatible with a decent respect for the rights of a weaker brother; and that the famous dictum anent trade following the flag is one coined by the imperialist mind to justify its own disregard for international justice. No country is so designed by its clean record and moral authority as ours to be the spokesman of the western powers now the time seems come to offer a concerted warning against the disorder that is unfortunately accompanying the march of General Chiang-kai-shek's army, and upon the ugly rumors of Bolshevist affiliations that, however founded in fact they may be, are casting discredit upon China's effort to attain nationality.

A CURIOUS outgrowth of popular literary criticism is displayed in various castigations of Edna Ferber's Show Boat. The book itself—despite the impressive "110th Thousand" on the dust-cover—would hardly seem to merit much serious attention. Its analysis is flimsy and superficial; its style is precisely what one can get from the New York Daily Graphic at a considerably lower price. But all this hardly makes Edna Ferber guilty of the philosophic sins that have been attributed to her. One chapter, dealing rather incidentally with convent life, seems in particular to have aroused a great deal of ire. A critic has even ventured to demand that all Catholics refrain from buying or reading any of the books issued by Miss Ferber's publishers. Apart from the fact that such an action would mean a serious inconvenience to all who care for modern literature, it must be considered unethical by anybody who has seen a little of

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the relations between authors and their publishers. Moreover, after a careful reading of the chapter in question, we confess a total inability to see or understand what the fuss is all about.

A WOMAN and her daughter visit a convent in down-town Chicago where girls from relatively shadowy families are cared for and educated. That such convents exist, is obviously a fact; and that they function is about as splendid a tribute to the sacrificial charity of the Sisterhoods as we can think of. Who else—the point is implied by Miss Ferber herself—would take such girls in? Are the critics unable themselves to realize the situation, or to appreciate the Sisters' work? We think the trouble is, rather, that the woman who brings her daughter finds the convent gloomy and sad. How a character like her could do anything else, is to us incomprehensible. The author clearly and unmistakably looks through her creature's eyes. She voices no opinion of her own any more than Shakespeare expresses his views of honor through Richard. The whole point is that the little girl in the case sees nothing as her mother does, but takes to the Sisters at once. She likes all that the older woman cannot understand. The whole matter is so perfectly obvious that we cannot but deplore the steps which some otherwise excellent and well-meaning women's organizations have taken to voice their indignation. It tends to make Catholic criticism ridiculous. If we had our way, we should affirm rather that the real reflection on the convents is that so many of their graduates should take Edna Ferber seriously—or, indeed, take her at all.

THE news that addresses on aspects of Catholic doctrine have been delivered by priests on rostrums usually reserved for clergymen of other denominations, leaves most of us with some feelings of surprise. But the habit of "public meetings" has become so rooted in many non-Catholic congregations, that such an exposition of the Church's doctrine as was made by the Reverend T. Lawrason Riggs in the parish hall of the Mount Vernon Congregational Church, met a genuine opportunity and—we venture to say—a real need. No doubt the subject assigned in this instance, The Relation of the Religious Experience of the Individual to the Religious Authority of the Institution, was precisely one of those in which the modern mind outside the Church is most profoundly interested. Father Riggs, we gather from a newspaper account, "emphasized the importance which the Church attaches to objective moral laws as independent of the individual; but followed it with the explanation that, on the other hand, the Church is appreciative of the supremacy of the individual conscience." No words could be better calculated to dispel the impression—how it arose would be an interesting question—that Catholics are blind sheep, huddled together by a morbid fear. That they were said to an audience outside the Church is a good omen, in so far as experience demonstrates the comparative innocuousness of "missions" given under circumstances which practically preclude the possibility of an audience. A series of such addresses would certainly go a long way toward clearing up and banishing numberless misunderstandings.

BISHOP HICKEY, of Rochester, has performed a service of great value in issuing a pastoral condemning the excess of levity that takes place outside churches at many weddings. "With all earnestness we protest," he says in words that ought to be heeded beyond his diocese as well as within it, "against the practice of attaching objects of any kind to the car or carriage awaiting the bridal party. We insist that they be allowed to leave the church with the respect due to the place and the occasion. Nor should this practice take place away from the church; but it should be totally stopped at all places and times." One of the pagan customs which has yielded most slowly to centuries of pressure from the Church, is that of seizing upon the occasion of a wedding for an outbreak of coarseness and brutality. A base impulse, which is one of the oldest known to humanity, is at the bottom of the slapstick humor with which friends, supposed to be well-meaning, afflict the intense sensitiveness of a woman and a man at a moment when the solemnity of life is—or ought to be—most poignantly impressed upon them.

THE couple are defenseless. They bow to the punishment as if they were college freshmen being hazed. The bride is overwhelmed—confused. If the bridegroom is tempted to resist the affront, a sense of his pitiful inadequacy to do so effectively restrains him. Public opinion can scarcely be appealed to hopefully to abate this form of outrage. Traditions of too many generations unconsciously find expression in the acts of the rioters, or near rioters. Rice is hurled in showers which sometimes cause stinging pain to bride and bridegroom. Old shoes are catapulted through the air with little thought of the hurt they may do if they strike a fair mark. Inscriptions luridly smeared on placards for the vehicle which bears away the couple offend the sense of refinement. A bishop, or a priest, is the proper one to take the lead in making one more effort to curb this amazingly persistent practice. As Monsignor Hickey says in his pastoral, anyone who witnesses a marriage ceremony performed in a Catholic church, and particularly when the Nuptial Mass is celebrated, is impressed with the seriousness and reverence shown in the act. "How unfitting and undignified," he adds, "to pass through the door of the church after the ceremony to face an ordeal of levity that is unbecoming and little less than disgraceful." The exercise of authority is needed in order to

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cope with an abuse so widespread, and religious authority is the best of all for the purpose.

THE statement of the Reverend Samuel M. Zwemer, a Protestant missionary for many years in the East, that Persia is "ripe for the benefits of Christian civilization," may be a little exaggerated, but it will not surprise those who know anything of the religious history of the old realm of Irun. Persians, who, it should not be forgotten, are an Aryan race, akin to most European stocks, have never accepted Mohammedism "en bloc," and their history is a long record of invasion and martyrdom at the hands of the Turks, those Calvinists of Islam. Perhaps one of the most remarkable things about Persia is the hold that the doctrine of atonement by blood has always had upon the imagination of its people. Not only was it the original home of the Mithraic cult, whose work in creating a Christian ambient in ancient Rome is only beginning to be studied as it deserves, but in the annual "Passion Play," which commemorates the death of Hussein, still celebrated annually at the feast of Mohurrum, there is a likeness to the Christian Holy Week that is startling—the more so as the name of Our Saviour occurs again and again. "Certain episodes in the Hussein legend," says Professor Edward G. Brown, of Cambridge, England, one of the leading authorities on Persian literature and history, "would almost seem to indicate an unconscious sense of solidarity with the Christians . . . arising from their participation in the doctrine of atonement." It is satisfactory to know that the Persian government, since the consecration of Monsignor Cluzel as first apostolic delegate to Persia fifty years ago, has been friendly to Catholic missionary effort, and that a native priesthood of the old Chaldean church still survives, in union with the Holy See.

ALTHOUGH the world of classical scholarship will regret in a particular way the passing of Professor John Swinnerton Phillimore, whose death was announced recently, it is a distinct loss to all modern English culture. Few men brought to the study of antiquity so much vitality or robust curiosity. He believed that education might be defined as a development of ability to feel at home in any century—among any cultivated people. Those who read the greatest address of his academic career—it was reprinted not long ago by the London Mercury—will remember with what remarkable power and conviction he developed the idea that mankind cannot afford to lose contact with the "sources" of its inspiration and fortitude. The same central idea was valuably contributed to by outstanding published investigations. Here he displayed something of the same poetic sense which made his work as a writer of original verse so illuminating and attractive. Dr. Phillimore was, as is well known, a convert to the Catholic Church.

THE MARLBOROUGH MUDDLE

SURELY all of us are obliged to Dr. Manning, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York, for his rather headstrong pronouncement on the subject of the Marlborough marriage. This stated rather concisely a great deal of opinion held by Americans who have no intimate acquaintance with the processes of canon law, and it afforded Catholic authorities an opportunity to discuss a subject which ordinarily would almost certainly put a congregation to sleep. We shall go over the ground a little carefully here because we feel that acrimonious references to the matter have done nobody any good. It is one thing to differ. It is another to know what the difference is about. Many people are exemplifying the first without taking any heed of the second. Precisely because one cannot help thinking that Bishop Manning is among the "many," it is interesting to consider his words.

The question at issue is simply this: "Were the Marlboroughs married?" An English Catholic diocesan court answered in the negative, and Rome upheld their verdict. Bishop Manning, however, replies in the affirmative. His case may be outlined briefly:

The marriage was solemnized in his diocese and was upheld by the Anglican Church, speaking through the Bishop of Oxford, as valid after the Duke had obtained a civil divorce decree.

The parties were united for years and children were born to them. Meanwhile nothing was said about the possible invalidity of their contract.

In the face of these circumstances, it was "impertinent" of a Roman Catholic tribunal to rule upon the matter at all, and more "impertinent" to declare there had been no marriage.

The "impertinence" was largely due to the fact that the tribunal was "foreign"—i.e., foreign to the United States and foreign to the Protestant Episcopal body.

The evidence submitted was insufficient.

This case—which we believe is stated fairly—is reinforced by a certain amount of popular feeling that "money" and "social prestige" had something to do with the solution. But before making reference to this undoubtedly widespread sentiment, it is best to repeat that the question upon which the tribunal passed was merely this: "Were the Marlboroughs married?" Did it have the right to weigh this question? We answer that the tribunal, like hundreds of similar courts through the world, was rightfully established to administer canon law. This is a code of moral legislation which is one and the same for the universal Church and which has been appealed to and applied since the days of the Fathers. Surely anybody who wishes to see how it affects him or her has a perfect right to find out. Should Bishop Manning care to get an opinion from a canonical court regarding some detail of parish organization, nobody would

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deny him the privilege or say that the court was barred from responding. It might refuse to render the service, and we should then admit that the Bishop had been treated uncharitably. But in any case he would come knowing that the law is not American or English or French, but universal. To call it foreign is equivalent to saying that the Catholic Church itself is foreign—a charge which Dr. Manning is obviously not stupid enough to make. Or was he betrayed momentarily into crass lip-worship of a kind of bigotry specifically allied with the worst elements in America?

Here, then, was the former Duchess of Marlborough seeking information about a very simple question. She had previously been divorced by a civil court. She had married again. She was, at least to some extent, interested in seeing whether her position could be legitimized in the eyes of the Catholic Church. Very likely her French husband suggested the action and outlined what it implied. Can these things be called "impertinent?" Surely Dr. Manning would not have us infer that because the Duchess had once been married inside the Protestant Episcopal communion, it would be "impertinent" for her to change her mind about that communion? This charge of "impertinence" would, we suggest, be rather damaging to all Episcopalians—they having once exercised the same impertinence concerning Rome.

In answering her question negatively, the Catholic court was following certain established provisions regarding the marriage contract. These are all historically derivative from natural law and revelation. In other words, they have the same origin as the doctrine of indissoluble marriage. Here the provision which based the decision was the simple ruling that marriage is a personal contract between two people, by means of which each pledges himself or herself to the other. Such a contract is impossible, says the Church with a wise regard for human nature, unless it is assented to by the will. This means clearly that you and I are not bound to accept the burdens of matrimony unless we really agreed in the beginning to accept them. History reveals that this point of view was upheld officially by the universal Church already in the ninth century. It follows logically from the doctrine that free will is an essential constituent of human nature: if marriage is a personal contract, the "whole man" must enter into it, and that necessarily means free will. The defense of personal freedom as a moral truth has cost Catholic philosophy many a hard battle, and it would be unfortunate if the antagonists were now Christian bishops. But very likely Dr. Manning would admit that the free-will provision is wise in itself. He might reason that years of living as man and wife would alter the situation to the extent of making the bargain voluntary. Here he would find that numerous trained legal minds had so reasoned before him. The present Catholic law on this aspect of the matter is a compromise arrived at after generations of experience and of thoughtful debating pro and contra. There is a considerable amount of precedent on the point and a study of it would be illuminating.

The matter of evidence remains. Dr. Manning considers it insufficient, and the Catholic tribunal considered it adequate. Which side is right must be considered a matter of pure probability. One may legitimately differ with a judgment of a canonical court; and one may even appeal over it to the Pope. But when Dr. Manning spoke he did not know what the evidence was. He had no abstract of the arguments which had been presented. He merely delivered an opinion from the outside, quite in the same way as a policeman might decide that a dark man found leaving a room where a murder had been committed was the culprit. Such opinions are not usually considered final. That is precisely why there are civil trials. And that is also precisely why, we submit, it is more logical to credit the Catholic answer to the Marlborough question than to accept Dr. Manning's opinion.

We appreciate the Bishop's efforts to stem the tide of divorce. Every time he refuses to recognize the righteousness of a civil separation, he appeals to a moral law binding on the faithful over and beyond civil regulations. He is probably fully aware of the fact that this law is nowhere more highly respected than inside what he would term the Roman Church. Consequently it would have been salutary to remember that just as this basic agreement was not "impertinent," the equally well-established and binding provisions concerning what constitutes marriage could not be termed "impertinent" without a display of ill-temper. If he does not consider the Catholic doctrine of the sanctity of the matrimonial bond "foreign," why should he term the administration of that doctrine "foreign"?

That the prestige of wealth influenced the court is a popular feeling based on ignorance. The Marlborough case has been preceded by many another. If those who talk so glibly on the street-corners would take the trouble to gather a few data, they might be surprised to discover that the greater portion of those who have appealed to the ecclesiastical courts were persons so humble and obscure that they did not make news. Some writer familiar with the material would do us all a great service if he transcribed from the official records a series of cases similar to the one now enkindling so much misguided wrath. It is conceivable that a few even of the very indignant would take the trouble to read what he had to say. That money has occasionally played a rôle in the history of the Church nobody will deny. But surely one does not need much enlightenment to discover that the vow of poverty would be a forgotten and curious tradition were it not for that same Church. Here again residents in glass houses should not take up the rôle of David—size is not the only requirement for the part.

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MAN AND THE ORIGINS OF LIFE

By BERTRAM C. A. WINDLE

AS THERE was a time, all will admit, when there was no such thing as life on this earth, the question arises: Where did that life come from? Some very distinguished men have suggested that the first living germs may have sifted down to earth from some other planet, just as cocoanuts washed up on a newly risen coral island take root there. To begin, whether life, as we know it, exists on any other planet, or whether it could possibly survive the awful journey through the cold of space to reach our earth is beyond our present ken. Nor would that theory be a solution of our question, for regardless of where it was first born, we should still have to ask how life arose. Again, is the difference between living and not-living things one of degree or of kind? Is there a specific difference between the sparrow and the stone? Is biology a separate science or is it only a branch of chemistry and physics? Thirty or forty years ago, many scientists would have answered that biological difference is only one of degree and that everything in life could be explained by chemistry and physics. Not so today, for the pendulum has taken a considerable swing.

The curious and inexplicable thing in this connection is the way some persons seem to think that, if the so-called anti-vitalistic theory were ever proved, a deadly blow would be inflicted on religion. Nothing could be more distant from the truth. Spontaneous generation was an acceptable thesis to many up to very recent years; and there are still those who think that this form of genesis may be going on all around us, undetected. Nevertheless, the scientific world is just about a unit, since the proofs brought forward by Pasteur show that no shred of evidence exists for anything of the kind. That is as far as either proof or disproof has been able to go. In the time of Saint Thomas, everybody believed that life did originate directly from not-living matter, i.e., in spontaneous generation, yet no one found his faith upset in any way by that belief. Avicenna, the Arabian commentator on Aristotle, who differed on this point from Saint Thomas, declared—after the materialistic method—that living came from not-living matter by the mere operation of natural laws. The amendment put forward by Saint Thomas held that originally the powers whereby living things emerged from matter were an endowment from the Creator. And the approved teaching today is the same. I quote from the manual of Archbishop Sheehan:

> The Church teaches that life as well as every other form of activity must be traced to God as its ultimate source, and as the fount and well-head of created being with all its modifications. But whether the first animate thing that appeared in the world received its life from Him by a direct creative act, or through the interplay of powers or properties which He had already communicated to matter—that is a question that she leaves perfectly open. She allows us full freedom to choose between these alternatives as scientific evidence may direct.

The Catholic would go further and agree (with Boodin) that "of all philosophies, materialism makes the greatest demands upon man's credulity," and that the most satisfactory explanation is the one which declares that life in one way or the other came into existence at the will of the Creator, which physical science is certainly incapable of disproving.

The question of the origin of life leads to that much debated subject—evolution, or transformation, which is a much better name. Not much time will be spent on it, for the plausibility or the reverse of the doctrine of transformism is not to be debated here nor need we delay long over the question whether it is a theory or a proved fact. Some hold the latter; among them Canon de Dorlodot, the distinguished palaeontologist of Louvain. Others, like Millikan, tell us that it never can be proved—by experiment, I take it. If well-trained scientists—Millikan is not the only one—persist in contradicting a thesis, then that thesis cannot be said to be proved in any accurate sense of the word. Proved or unproved, what is the teaching of the Church in regard to the theory of transformism? I have seen in newspapers and heard from the lips of educated men of the world, who have traveled widely, the astounding statement that Catholics are not so much as allowed to discuss the subject of evolution! Considering the number of books, de Dorlodot's for example, which have appeared on the subject bearing Catholic imprimaturs, this misconception is about the most absurd that can be imagined. There is absolutely not one word of truth in it.

On the teaching of the Church I shall appeal again to the manual of Archbishop Sheehan, which is intended for the use of Irish Catholic school children and may be taken to be rigidly orthodox:

> The Church, while teaching as of faith that God created the living things from which all existing plants and lower animals are descended, leaves us free to hold either the theory of permanentism or the theory of theistic evolution. According to the former, God by a direct act created each species separately; according to the latter, He caused some or all species to develop in course of time from one or more directly-created stocks, or from inanimate matter. The Church condemns as contrary to faith the theory of materialistic or atheistic evolution held by Haeckel and others, which denies or ignores the existence of a personal God, and claims that life in all its forms has developed under the operation of blind forces or causes.

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Dozens of other similar statements could be cited from Catholic theologians, but the one given, which is official, is sufficient.

A recent work, entitled Reflective Thinking, very properly argues that evolution is not self-explanatory. Whitehead most truly says "a thoroughgoing evolutionary philosophy is inconsistent with materialism. The aboriginal stuff, or material from which a materialistic philosophy starts, is incapable of evolution." His argument, which is too long to be quoted in an article of this length, should be studied in the setting of the book itself. To anyone sincerely desiring to probe matters to the bottom who is not afflicted with what Father Wasmann, S.J., a most distinguished biologist and theistic evolutionist, calls "theophobia," the Catholic doctrine above enunciated will prove to be the only full and satisfying answer. For example, the evolutionary theory, as usually formulated, postulates the existence of a world of unicellular organisms at an early period. These organisms, on the showing of Weismann, were potentially immortal, for death is the price which we pay for having a body, as somebody puts it. Nothing in the way of natural selection could well have been at work, and if there had been, it is not easy to see why it should urge the unicellular on to multicellularity. What did? Creative impulse answers that question, and there is no other intelligible answer known to me.

"That is mysticism," I suppose, will be the response. Well, have it so, but then please explain the thing unmystically. Orthogenesis, the urge of an internal force, is an alternative explanation quite fashionable with some today, but branded as "mystical" again by others. Now those who hold that view must tell us where this orthogenetic principle came from. Turn which way you will, the Catholic explanation does not sin against science nor against common sense, as the materialistic explanation does. Father Weismann, S.J., a man of science who is also a member of a strict religious order, shall end this discussion:

> If we assume that God is the creator of all things, and that the world created by Him had evolved independently and automatically, we have actually a greater idea of God than if we regard Him as constantly interfering with the working of the laws of nature. Let us imagine two billiard players, each having a hundred balls to direct. The one needs a hundred strokes in order to accomplish his end; the other, with one stroke, sets all the balls in motion, as he will. The latter is undoubtedly the more skilful player. Saint Thomas Aquinas stated long ago that the force of any cause was the greater, the further its action extended. God does not interfere directly in the natural order where He can work through natural causes. This is by no means a new principle, but a very old one, and it shows that the theory of evolution, as a scientific hypothesis and theory, as far as it can be proved, is perfectly compatible with the Christian theory of the origin of things. According to this view, the evolution of the organic world is but a little line in the book of the evolution of the whole universe, on the title-page of which still stands, written in indelible letters: "In the beginning, God created heaven and earth."

A charge drawn up by White which proclaimed that the Church had done deadly injury to the cause of learning by strictly forbidding the dissection of the human body, was based by him on a bull of Pope Boniface VIII of 1300. Dr. Walsh has shown that the bull in question did nothing of the kind, for it related entirely to a custom which had grown up during the Crusades. Crusaders, like other persons, had a fancy for being buried near their own homes, and comrades would promise, in the event of their death, to see that this was done. It was not easy in those days to embalm or otherwise preserve bodies and the custom grew up of boiling off the flesh, and taking the bones along home. The Pope thought it was an unseemly method and forbade it. He may have been right or wrong, but that is how it was. Baffled in that respect, White alleged that this bull was used as a cover to prohibit the use of cadavers in the study of human anatomy. That is nonsense, for Mondini, one of the first to perform dissections, performed them in Bologna in the second decade of the century of the bull in question. Subsequently many papal physicians and surgeons were also anatomists and published their writings on the subject under the very noses of successive Popes. Stenson, an anatomist of great distinction, was made a bishop, not, of course, on that account, but it cast no shadow over his orthodoxy.

Take one further incident, from the life of Saint Francis de Sales. When a young man of most holy life studying law at Padua, he was so near unto death as to have received the last sacraments. He expressed the wish to his tutor that his body should be handed over to the medical school for the purposes of dissection, in order to lessen that much the horrible scenes of body-snatching which were a disgrace to the city. He recovered and in making the speech of laudation conferring on him of the doctorate, Panciroli, his professor, alluded thus to the occurrence: "Humane, charitable, compassionate, even to the length of bequeathing your body to the public welfare when you saw yourself at the gates of death."

On Reading Some Lines in Horace

"Lydia, dic, per omnes deos, te oro . . ."

Patient of the dust and goad,
Let the ox the pastures scent,
Then, how heavy pulls the load,
All his task turned punishment!

Nay, but of the heart that takes
Vows and sighs their worth above—
Who has told, the morn it wakes
On a world all lost for love?

HENRY LONGAN STUART.

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MEXICO: OCCIDENT VERSUS ORIENT

By JOHN KEPPLER

(This is the second of two aricles on Mexico by Mr. Keppler, the first of which appeared in The Commonweal of December 1.—The Editors.)

WHAT, however, presents a problem of the first magnitude is the fact that Mexico, which for three centuries was ruled by western standards and by white men, and which for the last hundred years has drifted under the leadership of mixed men with like standards, is today a cultureless but basically oriental nation in a western world. As President Calles ironically remarked, "the foreigner has left not even his culture behind." Landless, the Indian plays the pathetic part of the "white man's burden" in populated centres, or else takes himself to the mountain fastnesses in vain attempt to redeem his once-glorious past.

Independence put an end to foreign political power, but not to foreign influence, either social or economic, fortified as it was and is by ethnic penetration. Illusory has been this independence—a mockery. Juárez undertook to wed the Indian again to the land, but the human tree which had been uprooted and bled and which had so long to draw its sustenance from alien elements could not be easily nor quickly replanted, even in indigenous soil. With iron hand Díaz sought to exterminate banditry and foster modern ranching and industrial methods, and once more a western castle was washed from the shores of the Indian sea. Had Juárez had before him another life's span, his star might have guided the republic toward untold heights. A dogged oriental patience was his sword, which he wielded with such understanding at home and such good grace abroad that posterity in his native land now worships in the halo of his genius, while a western world looks admiringly on. Possessed of many of Lincoln's attributes, he succeeded in striking the rare chord of harmony between Orient and Occident, retaining throughout the staunch friendship of the United States.

Sympathetically, the leaders of the Madero, Carranza, and Obregon revolutions listened to the Indian's cry for land. Under the present agrarian program—in operation ten years and more—2,500,000 acres of privately-owned lands have been expropriated and distributed among adjoining villages, payment (with the consent of the United States) to be made in bonds instead of cash. Unfortunately, the program is far from successful; in high government circles even, its failure is admitted. Never has there been a lack of good land, but the problem was and is to win the Indian to till it. As part of the program, agricultural schools have been established, in which modern farming is taught; still farmers are born and reared, not educated. Habit, hard work, management, and capital are needed in modern agriculture, and of these the Indian possesses only the willingness and ability to work, with which alone he cannot satisfy his rural longing. Hence, the agrarian program has but served to make Mexico land-poor. Once-productive estates have been subdivided, and many of them now lie idle; often peons have joined their landlords in resisting further distribution, and Mexico is now obliged actually to import agricultural products which she formerly raised herself.

To the Obregon-Calles régime goes the credit of sensing the country's real need: agriculture, carried on by the native population. But machine methods are fostered, which, while they may be practicable in other countries, are not suited to Mexico, as experience has proved and is proving. Again Indian Mexico is rejecting western civilization. In fact, the economic methods of the revolution differ from the methods of the Díaz régime only in this: that Díaz was frankly a capitalist, whereas the revolutionaries were and are avowedly proletarian; with the result that the Díaz régime had strong credit abroad, whereas the revolutionary régimes have inspired none. Now the Yaquis are on the warpath, and, oddly, a revolutionary government is proceeding to subdue them (proposing the use of aeroplanes) exactly as Díaz would have done. Calles and Obregon claim the government's purpose to be the elimination of bandits: so did Díaz. But what is banditry; what is its cause? No more than the Indian's choice of what to him seems the lesser of two evils, the greater being slow death in congested centres, where disease and mortality are admittedly astounding. Banditry is merely a symptom of a long-standing social condition. Until the condition is removed the symptom will remain, and stern measures will accomplish nothing permanent. The way has not yet been opened by which the Indian may return to the land and develop the culture for which he longs. Unaided, he cannot return, so meanwhile he must play true to form—true to the picture of Thompson's surging Indian sea, periodically convulsing to throw off the white crust which surfaces its blue waters.

Broadly, then, the case of Mexico resolves itself into a case of Occident versus Orient, but with the addition of a majority element of Mestizos. Thompson applies to them his interpretation of the Mendelian law of reversion into primal types, sharing in great measure, either consciously or unconsciously, the opinions against intermarriage which Spencer secretly expressed to the Japanese government, when in effect he advised Japan to permit neither foreigners nor their capital to gain a foothold in the island empire:

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a conclusion which would mean the ultimate extinction of the Mestizo. Exact science, however, often serves but to undo itself, let it be stretched far enough. Heredity may not be disparaged, of course; but has not environment also its effects? While intermarriage between widely divergent types momentarily produces a blended tradition, yet Nilsson shows that it may also mean the birth of a new race, with a culture distinctly its own, as witness the case of modern Italy. In any event, the future no less than the present must take account of Mestizo and Indian alike. In the last hundred years both have materially increased their numbers, notwithstanding an exceedingly unfavorable environment.

During four centuries of foreign penetration, Mexico, although seriously wounded, has not succumbed. What if she should hold out another four centuries, or two, or even one? (The fate of a nation cannot be reckoned otherwise than in terms of centuries.) Might not the western world be then leaning eastward and the eastern world westward? And what if Mexico's scattered energies should gradually draw themselves around some master—a master who would give her not only policy, but destiny as well—a policy and a destiny which would enable her to live harmoniously amid western civilization but without succumbing to it? Time and that patience which is the Indian's heritage are Mexico's strong allies. The Occident, as Spengler ably depicts, has entered the stage of civilization, shedding its culture for city industrial life. This, therefore, is an epoch of industrial dynamics, wherein captains of industry and commerce and masters of finance dominate all human activity; wherein the city rules and the country is a mere province. It is an epoch wherein Caesar reigns, and "to Caesar must be rendered what is Caesar's." It was no man's theory; it is but a development—an unfolding with which one must live in harmony.

Mexico is part of this modern western world, the neighbor of an industrial power of the first order. Futile must be any attempt to resist the trend of the time. Socialist and communist join in deriding the industrial order; still, both must base their claim to recognition upon that same order, merely substituting public ownership and democratic management for private ownership and individual management. Without capital neither socialism nor communism could flourish for a day: why, therefore, attack capital? Was not capital—surplus labor—the instrument by which man lifted himself out of the jungle to become a cultured being? Must not Mexico develop the instinct to acquire and possess, to accumulate and conserve, before she can make even a beginning toward real independence? Socialism and communism are merely phenomena of this industrial age, and since the age itself does not appeal to Mexico, it is quite unlikely that its phenomena will.

Mexico's future does not depend upon modern, large-scale industrial development, nor yet upon modern, large-scale agricultural enterprise. Mexico cannot hope to compete with industrial nations, not even in her own markets; nor can she hope to compete with other nations in agriculture. Neither is weak isolation her alternative, granting that it were possible. Mexico's path lies in the direction of the small, intensively cultivated farm in agriculture and the small shop in industry, the former fitting the Indian, the latter the Mestizo. Agriculture and industry, followed in scattered rural centres, not as business enterprises, but as means of independent livelihood, would avoid congestion and standardization, and would harmonize with the natural bent of the population—a bent which, if encouraged, might acquire the momentum of a development. Agriculturally self-sustaining; buying abroad those articles of machine manufacture which other nations could furnish more economically, in exchange for those articles, the product of her native skill, which other nations did not produce, Mexico could in time become economically free by the accumulation of a surplus sufficient to discharge her obligations. Her mineral and petroleum resources, with her tropical agricultural products and raw materials, would stand her in good stead. In any event, order at home and friendship abroad must accompany the nation's creative awakening—the development of a peasant folk, with a culture its own.

Upon the boggy turf of the near future one may not venture far. But certain conclusions seem inevitable. The economic power which the Church formerly had cannot be restored, and the Church's influence in politics will therefore decline; but her spiritual hold upon the people will continue; her temples must be restored, and the government must relinquish its power of interfering with the internal administration of the Church, such as limiting the number of priests and preventing the teaching of religion in parochial schools. Further land acquisition by aliens may be halted, but lawfully acquired holdings cannot be disturbed. Just taxation and freedom of operation, with protection of lawfully acquired rights, is the only basis upon which the petroleum or any other industry can function. The absence of a native middle class, even a peasant class, leaves the country at the mercy of the army, of events—a harrowing fate. With the next presidential election less than two years distant; with President Calles ineligible for another term, and Obregon also if the constitution be not amended (an amendment is being proposed); with the leaders of the agrarian and labor groups opposing each other, the immediate future does not look bright. Add the unworkableness of the agrarian program, and the future becomes disconcerting, for in agriculture must the destiny of the nation take root. And hideous is the monster disease and death which now stalks through the land.

One cannot help wondering why so much energy is

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wasted upon problems which are not fundamental; why that energy is not directed toward saving the nation from immediate peril; but, then, governing Mexico in any circumstance would be a stupendous task; with the human materials at hand, as President Calles himself must realize, the task befits a genius, if indeed it is not impossible. But every situation, every human condition, has within it the seeds of its own fate. Polarity, action and reaction, cause and effect, are the great forces which rule, not only man's material being, but his intellect as well. Does another revolution—still further misery—await this unhappy nation? No one, understanding the futility of revolutions, could wish her such a disaster. It does seem that the memory of revolution is yet too vivid for another to happen, and there is not the vitality for such an ordeal.

If that be true, then it means that the bottom has been reached, and soon or late an upward course may be struck—slowly if untried theories hold sway and foreign disfavor is courted—rapidly if the star of a master, a builder, should illumine the dark firmament—always a possibility, if not a probability, in time of chaos. The Church would not now oppose a Juárez, as she did half a century ago. Standing committed to citizen ownership of the soil—the small property—she may yet bend her influence in that direction, supporting the Indian's inclination toward the same end and the Mestizo's inclination toward small industry. Precisely because (being somewhat oriental herself!) the Catholic Church is the only stabilizing influence outside the government; because she has a world outlook, she wields a power which cannot and should not be ignored in any program involving the upbuilding of the people. Events taking such a course, the future does not look so dark. Chaos is Mexico's one great enemy; prolonged, it may make her ruin complete. Domestic inertia, not foreign capital, is her present misfortune.

America—she is no longer the United States—is not the "colossus" to be dreaded. She also is attaining a world outlook. It would not be the first time events had brought both nations together upon common ground. The experience which America has gained and is gaining in her government of the Philippine Islands will enable her to deal more understandingly with her Mexican neighbor.

The basis of all economic life; the beginning of all true independence is agriculture. Mexico's struggle with her agrarian problem is therefore the struggle which will determine her fate as a nation. It is upon that stage Mexico is attempting to recover what she has lost to the West. Can she do it? More immediately, the foreign foe with which Mexico is now at close grips is socialism, communism. That is the first stage of this historic last battle.

NEW IDEAS AND OLD SCHOLASTICISM

By ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

DURING the last fifty years, philosophy has presented a variegated, not to say confused, spectacle. Six important schools have appeared in the field, two idealistic (neo-Hegelianism in England and neo-idealism in Italy) three realistic (new realism, critical realism, neo-scholasticism) and one which is neither and both (pragmatism).

The time would seem to be ripe for the emergence of a frankly dualistic philosophy. Such a philosophy has been advanced by neo-scholasticism during the last half-century with steadily increasing success. The birth of the movement must be traced to the famous encyclical Aeterni Patris of Pope Leo XIII in 1879, calling the attention of the Catholic world to the value of scholasticism in general and the work of Saint Thomas Aquinas in particular, at that time neglected and ill-understood even in Catholic seminaries. As a result, a special chair for the study of Saint Thomas was established at the University of Louvain in 1882 and entrusted to the young professor of philosophy who later became Cardinal Mercier. Mercier understood perfectly that it was no part of the Pope's intention or of true philosophic thinking to attempt to revive Thomism in its original form with its incrustations of mediaeval science. Saint Thomas was, of course, limited in his knowledge of scientific facts by the conditions of his era. On the other hand, both the Pope and the young professor, who must share between them the honor of founding neo-scholasticism, were inspired by the belief in the fundamental truth of Saint Thomas's metaphysics and the further faith that a thing once true is always true. Thus from the outset neo-scholasticism stood opposed to the relativism which has been the dominant mood in modern thought, outside of philosophy as well as in it; from the outset it was devoted to the old conception of truth as something which does not change with men's minds, but remains fixed and therefore—and only therefore—permits of growth in knowledge.

The task was to rethink scholasticism in modern terms, particularly in relation to modern science. Accordingly, we find Canon Mercier, as was then his title, following courses in medicine under Charcot in Paris, then devoting himself to the study of physiology, chemistry, and mathematics, and finally securing, with the assistance of the Pope, the foundation as a part of the University of Louvain of the Ecole Saint Thomas d'Aquin in which philosophy was to be pursued in

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harmony with science. Its laboratory of experimental psychology under the directorship of Michotte soon became famous for the researches conducted there. Other noted collaborators in the Ecole were found in Professors Nys, Deploige, and De Wulf, of whom the two former brought scholasticism into relation with modern physics and sociology while the latter conducted monumental researches in the history of mediaeval philosophy. A kindred spirit appeared in M. Etienne Gilson at the Sorbonne, author of works on Saint Thomas and Saint Bonaventure. The movement spread to other institutions in France, to Italy, to Germany, and to America. Today the literature of neo-scholasticism probably surpasses in extent that of any of the rival schools of contemporary philosophy.

And yet, since this work was mainly carried on in Catholic institutions, it remained until recently without overt contact with other movements in modern philosophy. Neo-scholasticism wisely wished to put its own house in order before it invited the neighbors in to inspect. During the last few years, however, conscious of its strength, it has become increasingly aggressive, eager to measure itself against other systems before the whole philosophic world. Cases in point are Le Néo-Réalisme Americain, by Kremer; God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy, by Sheen; and New Realism in the Light of Scholasticism, by Sister Mary Verda. More significant than any of these in the present connection, is Present Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism,* edited by John S. Zybura.

Dr. Zybura early in 1925 sent out to leading non-scholastic philosophers in America and Great Britain a questionnaire asking, in substance, for information as to the attitude of non-scholastics toward scholasticism, for their chief criticisms of the latter regarding both method and content, and for any suggestions that might lead to a more helpful understanding on each side. This questionnaire, according to the Fortnightly Review of St. Louis and also Dr. John Cavanaugh, president emeritus of Notre Dame University, was instrumental in initiating the formation of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, with its projected Quarterly Review of Philosophy, and also probably influenced the important place given neo-scholasticism on the program of the Sixth International Congress. Replies were received from nineteen American philosophers (including Perry, Hocking, Sheldon, Rogers, Dewey, and Pratt) and fourteen in Great Britain and Canada (including A. E. Taylor, Wildon Carr, Santayana, Alexander, Muirhead, and Laird). These replies are given in full in Present Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism, followed by a summary under the three headings, Commendation, Counsel, Criticism; then ensue contributions from ten neo-scholastics (including Jacques Maritain, Kremer, Noel, Olgiati, Millar, and Ryan); finally, there is an important article by Dr. Zybura himself on Scholasticism and the Period of Transition.

The answers of the non-scholastics are, with few exceptions, cordially friendly in tone, admitting only to deplore the traditional modern indifference to scholasticism. Many of them express high admiration for the emphasis upon reason in scholastic teachings, the objectivity of their ethics, and their recognition of the importance of the individual; in these three respects, as well as in its rational psychology, the advent of neo-scholasticism is welcomed.

Several pieces of well-meant advice are offered, of which one seems of considerable importance. It is charged that Catholic philosophers, at least in English-speaking countries, stand aloof from their non-Catholic philosophic brethren. Dr. Zybura adds vigorously:

> This spirit of aloofness seems to indicate that some neo-scholastics have forgotten the heavy penalty paid for a like isolation in the past. . . . For, as we shall see, one of the chief causes of the discredit and comparative oblivion into which scholastic philosophy lapsed during the period of the renaissance and after, was precisely such cloistered aloofness and indifference to fresh currents of thought and to new scientific interests. . . . What had been a robust and flourishing system, full of promise for the future, was condemned to centuries of solitude, precarious vegetation, and senile decay in schools and monasteries, through the short-sightedness of mere mechanical repeaters, wrong-headed partisans, blind pedants, closeted logic-choppers, Quixotic champions of defunct physical theories. Such timid or self-complacent parochialism is not only sure to lead to complete estrangement and stagnation, but it is diametrically opposed to the very nature and spirit of scholasticism as it existed in the period of its finest flowering.

Less needed, perhaps, is the counsel to adopt a reasonable and sympathetic attitude toward modern philosophy. "It is futile to ask the non-scholastics," some of them say, "to believe that all the eminent philosophers from Descartes on have merely been talking puerile nonsense. Neo-Thomists need to remember that mankind has not simply been playing the fool since 1274." The implied censure is only just with regard to the overenthusiasm of some of the lesser among the early neo-scholastics in condemnation of whose methods Dr. Zybura is equally outspoken:

> That mistaken, ultra-conservative zealotry of some of the first neo-scholastics not only alienated many from the movement at the very outset, but it flew in the face of the letter and spirit of the encyclical, and belied the very purpose of the scholastic revival. These did not call for a wholesale condemnation of several centuries of speculation as being only a period of intellectual aberrations, but for a critical appraisal, a synthetic utilization, and a harmonious fusion.

Of still greater interest is the section summarizing the criticisms of neo-scholasticism; the frankness of these, together with the equal frankness of the neo-

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scholastic replies, constitutes the outstanding feature of the book. Wherever there is free argument there is philosophy and, in the long run, mutual understanding; without free argument, there can be neither. The criticisms are numerous and will be enumerated in the order in which Dr. Zybura summarizes them. First, scholastic philosophy was dealt a death-blow by the new thought and science of the renaissance period. Second, neo-scholasticism is identified with theological dogmas; its outcome is determined in advance by ecclesiastical authority. Third, neo-scholastic philosophy has little in common with contemporary interests. Fourth, neo-scholastics seem to claim that theirs is a final or definitive system, and in particular they accept Saint Thomas as an authority in a sense in which a free-thinking and autonomous intellect can acknowledge no authority. Fifth, the neo-scholastic method is too rationalistic; it seems independent of empirical experience. Sixth, the scholastic terminology retained by neo-scholasticism is obscure and forbidding.

These criticisms are not taken up seriatim in the neo-scholastic articles, which devote themselves primarily for the most part to a direct exposition of the basic principles and objectives of neo-scholasticism, but they are, nevertheless, repeatedly and fully answered.

To the first criticism, indeed, Dr. Zybura devotes his special article already mentioned in which he develops the point of view indicated in the first of the two passages quoted above. Scholasticism was not dealt a death-blow by the renaissance because the two never really encountered. Scholasticism was already in a state of decline when the renaissance appeared; Duns Scotus and Ockham had turned away from its fundamental positions toward a voluntarism and nominalism utterly opposed to Thomism. The decline was not due to any intrinsic working out of the logical principles of Thomism, but to a volte-face resulting from the loss of philosophic interest and the growing concern with science and direct experience. Thus, prior to neo-scholasticism, Thomism and science have never actually been confronted.

The second criticism, that the outcome of neo-scholasticism is determined in advance by ecclesiastical authority, seems to the present writer the most important of all because it extends beyond philosophy and explains the widespread distrust of Catholic sincerity among non-Catholics. The limits of Catholic ecclesiastical authority are ill-understood by non-Catholics who often suspect it to be lurking in the background when the Catholic is actually appealing to reason alone. There is probably no way to obviate this distrust save by sufficient intercommunication between the two parties to establish an intuitive mutual understanding. But merely as regards philosophy the situation is simpler. Here it is sufficient to observe that in a philosophical discussion the question of motivation is irrelevant: a reasonable argument is a reasonable argument whatever be the motive behind it. If the neo-scholastic position should prove to be logically impregnable, it would matter not a whit philosophically whether it were in harmony with ecclesiastical authority or even secretly dictated by that authority. That the latter is actually the case, however, can hardly be credited by a reader of the present volume unless he is willing to give the lie to all the distinguished neo-scholastic authors represented.

The allegation that neo-scholasticism is devoid of contemporary interest is met, among others, by Moorehouse Millar with his demonstration that modern constitutional government derives from scholastic political theory, and that it is only as democracy has drifted away from what might fairly be called its scholastic interpretation that it has become involved in its present deplorable muddle. Even if God and the soul be considered "lacking in contemporary interest," no one, it is to be presumed, would today make the same charge against democracy!

The criticism that scholasticism regards itself as a final system and that it relies too much upon the authority of Saint Thomas is less serious than it looks. A moment's thought will make it evident that every system, nay every proposition, must, in the nature of the case, be regarded as final in those respects in which it is true; even the most complete relativism must regard relativism itself as a final truth. The only alternatives are the rather sorry ones of not believing what one asserts or of making no assertions at all. To say that neo-scholasticism in any other sense regards itself as final, as being complete, would be again to deny repeated neo-scholastic statements.

The fifth and sixth criticisms are clearly due to lack of acquaintance with neo-scholastic writings. "Independent of empirical experience" seems a strange charge to bring against a movement whose first efforts were, as we have seen, directed to the mastering of the empirical experience which modern science has formulated. The possession of a forbidding terminology is an even stranger charge for philosophers to bring, as if the subject could be dealt with in monosyllables, or as if, in this particular case, neo-scholasticism, largely a French product, were not peculiarly notable for the clarity of its expression; here again one of the fundamental efforts of the new movement being to rethink scholasticism, in technical terms, to be sure, but in modern, not mediaeval technical terms.

All in all, there can be little question that the neo-scholastics represented in Dr. Zybura's volume have successfully answered the non-scholastic criticisms. There can be no excuse, henceforward, for anyone's refusing to regard neo-scholasticism purely as a philosophy. It has established its place in philosophic history; it must be accepted or refuted, it cannot be ignored. For ample demonstration of this fact, as well as for bringing Catholics and non-Catholics together in a symposium of such importance, Dr. Zybura deserves the thanks of all lovers of philosophy.

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IS THERE A BUSINESS PSYCHOLOGY?

By J. B. M. CLARK

THERE is possibiy no more abused word in the present-day vocabulary of commerce than the blessed word "psychology," which bids fair to achieve in the sphere of business the fame enjoyed by "Mesopotamia" in the theological world of yesterday or the day before. Every business man who is worth his salt feels called on to talk about the "psychology" of his subordinates or his employees as the case may be. We are all psychologists nowadays, in much the same sense as Mr. Arthur Balfour said in the British House of Commons some years ago that we were all Socialists. Which stated bluntly may be understood to mean that we are all anxious to get while the getting is good of whatever may be going in the way of credit for innovations.

Just what was happening to the psychology of employees ten or fifteen years ago I do not quite know, and very little is recorded of their "reactions" except when they reacted violently (as they seemed to do with disturbing frequency) and had to be suppressed at all costs, or reacted unexpectedly and prematurely into graves. But even then they had their "psyche" thick upon them although nobody suspected it. The most successful employers of that day (as they are today) were those who regarded their employees as human beings and shaped their policies accordingly. However limited their knowledge of psychology might be, so long as they acted with human kindness they got results. They were on lines that were fundamentally sound.

At the present time, however, such a line of conduct is reckoned in some quarters too antiquated to be of much use. Human kindness has gone out of fashion to a large extent, and the monstrous proposition that "you cannot mix business and sentiment" has become axiomatic. The realm of commerce, which might be supposed to be an intensely human preoccupation, dealing as it does with the affairs of every-day life, is somehow or other assumed to lie outside of the influence of the natural emotions altogether, and to call for a branch of science to itself, together with a whole new code of classifications to cover its requirements, tag and sort out its species and varieties, and furnish it with guiding principles and a sense of direction.

"The opinion prevails among business men," wrote an eminent American psychologist not long ago, "that the psychology of business is different from other psychology. But as a matter of fact, business psychology is simply good psychology applied to business problems." This is really saying in effect that there is just one kind of human nature and that its workings are the same wherever you go. Possibly enough, the formidable title has something to do with this confusion of thought, and if we simply spoke about "soulology" or "mindology" we might get along better. But the name has now been firmly established and we must make the best of it. Yet there is really little or no excuse at this time of day for harboring delusions on the subject.

Business men have come very largely to believe in a certain something which I have called "business psychology," and now speak of and make a show of studying what they call the "psychology" of employees, as though some new qualities had been discovered in them not previously known, and some new field of exploration opened up. The results of this mistaken attitude might be imagined to be laughable rather than dangerous, and harmless enough in the main; but my purpose at present is to show that such is not necessarily the case, and that the prevailing attitude of the business mind in this connection is fraught with some danger both to the business man himself and to those committed by Providence to his care.

One has only to sit in at a meeting of directors, department heads, or executives of almost any kind and hear them discussing projected improvements or innovations to become aware early in the proceedings that many of these men actually do not seem to realize just what the needs of employees really are. One asks oneself with a sense of consternation how it comes about that the people who have been entrusted with such power for good or for evil can appear to be so insensible to the desires and the necessities of their fellow men and women. Can it be that they themselves are out of touch with, or beyond the appeal of, our common humanity? The more one hears the more is one reluctantly compelled to believe that the answer to this question is in the affirmative.

For there is talk of "them" and "they" that sounds strange and unreal; what "they" will like, and what is good for "them," and how "they" will react, and so on—on matters that have every appearance of being childishly simple and obvious. The reasoning of many business men seems to be based on the assumption that the employee is a kind of strange creature whose nature has to be carefully studied and his ways and habits tabulated and classified, just as though he were built on entirely different lines to those who are setting out to solve his and their own problems. The one thing so many executives utterly fail to do is to treat the employee as an ordinary human being.

That is why so much is heard about "getting together" with employees, a thing for which there should be little or no need (in the sense in which it is commonly done) in a properly regulated establishment. It is the eternal striving on the part of the employer

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or executive to understand something in the mind of the employee that appears perpetually to puzzle him. He wants to know what the employee is thinking, to ascertain his ambitions and aspirations. They are not difficult to ascertain, being for the most part precisely the same as those he himself harbors. And the reason why so many employees regard "getting together" with suspicion and distrust and are so reticent on such occasions is that they cannot for the life of them understand why the "boss" should not already know that their needs and desires are exactly the same as his own; that they want just the same comforts and conveniences and securities and advantages as he has, neither more nor less. And bewildered by his persistent ignoring of, or failure to comprehend, what seems to them so obvious, they conclude (perhaps rather hastily) that he has not really got their welfare at heart at all; that he does not consider them fit to enjoy the life he enjoys; or that he is trying to bluff them and put them off with less than they deserve, or reconcile them to do something they do not like. And any one of such conclusions cannot but leave them dissatisfied and with a rankling sense of injustice and wrong.

"It seems strange," writes Professor James Harvey Robinson in his famous Mind in the Making, "that human beings should have to be exhorted to understand human conduct. But that there is need for such the business world amply testifies." It does indeed seem strange. It is not only strange, but disquieting. The average individual rarely mistakes human kindness when it is extended in his direction. Why, then, should so many employers and executives have to strive so hard to make their motives clear? The answer appears to be either that the motives are mistaken by those they are intended to benefit, or that their direction is wrong. "Suspicion and hate," Professor Robinson goes on, "are much more congenial to our natures than love, for very obvious reasons in this world of rivalry and common failure."

It was no doubt this lack of understanding of common things that led the head of an important American firm not long ago to pronounce against the whole tribe of industrial engineers, business psychology experts, and specialists in industrial relations, and to conclude (quite unwarrantably) that the large sums spent on such people were for the most part thrown away. His complaint really was that the results seemed altogether out of proportion to the cost, inasmuch as their recommendations in the main were simple and obvious —so simple and obvious indeed that it is not until an "expert" at a large fee tells him about them that the business man, in many cases, can grasp them. And when he does stumble across real knowledge in this way, his first impulse is usually to cry out at the cost.

Be it noted I am not dealing at the moment with that very numerous class of employers who really do believe that their subordinates are not entitled to the privileges that they themselves enjoy, and who wax indignant if such be suggested. When pressed for reasons, they are usually found voicing the opinion that the rank and file have not worked so well or so hard as they themselves and do not deserve what the employers have acquired. To the suggestion that if employees could be imagined as working as well and as hard as employers and to the same advantage our plight as a community would be even worse than it is, since we would have nothing but leaders and no rank and file at all, the executive has nothing to say except to convey, by implication rather than the spoken word, that the rank and file are lacking in some quality innate in himself which they can never even hope to acquire.

It is not of and to this gentleman I am speaking (for I really do not know how to handle his case) but to those in the managing class who are actuated by a very real desire to do something for those over whom they have control, and who are so full of vague alarm that the solidarity of their position is in some mysterious way or other endangered. It is to these I would address myself, and indeed to that very vague alarm spoken of, which has its roots in something very fundamental in human nature. It is not for nothing that they are out of sympathy with, and have lost the approbation of, their fellows. And I will tell them the reason in the words of Mr. George Bernard Shaw, making due apologies for the introduction of such an authority in such a place. Writing somewhere about the unsuitability of the business man to look after the welfare of others, he says: "As though the man who has been accustomed to look after Number One all his life can suddenly turn round and think about the other fellow," or words to that effect. And that is the plain truth of the matter, unpalatable though it may be. Such a task is indeed difficult of accomplishment.

At the risk of being hackneyed, I would like to quote the old biblical admonition about the impossibility of serving God and Mammon, the profundity of which is far greater than is commonly supposed. It is sheer nonsense to expect, as so many business men seem to, that it is possible deliberately and steadfastly to pursue one course, and then reap the rewards that can only be enjoyed by those who have followed quite the opposite course. A man cannot spend half a lifetime in concentrating upon himself and his own advancement and then be able all at once to appreciate and understand the problems of the very men over whose heads he has climbed—much less ameliorate their condition. It was not in any spirit of jest that Herbert Spencer wrote: "Nothing is more degrading than to seek to impose your will upon another." No one can follow this course and escape the degradation. But is there anywhere in sight an executive who does not do this very thing every day of his life, or a young business man who is not sedulously cultivating that very form

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of degradation under the belief that it is the true way to greatness? The point is too obvious to need laboring.

Apparently what the business man who has followed such a course will have to do to keep abreast of the times (the type that has genuinely believed that business and sentiment could not be mixed and has stifled his natural impulses and emotions accordingly; who has fought always and only for his own hand; who has cultivated his superiors and connived at injustice and cruelty for "political reasons," and who has learned to harden his heart because it paid to do so) what he will have to do to get in touch and in sympathy with his fellows again is simply to start an equally laborious process of unmaking and rebuilding. There is no help for it, painful though it may seem.

That the affair is not without its humorous side is seen in such cases as that of the president of one of the largest and wealthiest Canadian corporations who recently retired from active service, and who unbosomed himself in pessimistic vein to the representative of a financial paper on the pass that things had come to, expressing, with a kind of quaint wistfulness, a fear that it was really harder for young men to get ahead today than it was when he was young. This to a certain extent was honest, although it came rather strangely from the lips of one who had not, so far as could be discovered, done as much as lift a finger to make it easier for those who were to follow. It did really appear as if the leaven of conscience was at work, in spite of the strenuous efforts of the representative of the financial paper to explain it away otherwise.

Much if not all of the foregoing is, I am aware, open to the modern objection of being "destructive criticism"; that poignant cry that so frequently denotes the fear of criticism of any kind at all. "Our hot defense of our ideas and beliefs does not indicate an established confidence in them," writes Professor Robinson in the work already quoted, "but often half distrust, which we try to hide from ourselves, just as one who suffers from bashfulness offsets his sense of inferiority and awkwardness by rude aggression." It is difficult to know how to tell an employer or a manager, himself a human being, how to be human. It is something he ought to know already. If he does not know, and cannot find out, his case must be sad indeed, and it does not appear probable that anything one can do or say will furnish the needed illumination.

Search

Have you never seen the anxious night
Sweeping away the dusty clouds
With frantic haste, when she has lost,
Amid the piled disorder of her floor,
The shining coin she stole from day?

JAMES E. TOBIN.

PUCCINI'S TURANDOT

By GRENVILLE VERNON

THE production of Turandot, Puccini's posthumous opera, at the Metropolitan Opera House, bears from the popular standpoint every mark of a pronounced success. An audience which packed the theatre greeted each curtain with enthusiastic applause and even with cheers, and it is understood that the ticket speculators have not been slow to take the hint. And yet he would be a daring prophet who would assert that twenty, or even ten years from now, Turandot will still find itself in the Metropolitan's repertory, in a list which certainly will include Bohème and Tosca and Butterfly.

If understanding of purely operatic effectiveness and technical mastery toward that end were enough to give life to a work, Turandot might face the future unafraid. Never had Puccini constructed a score with greater shrewdness, and never had he worked up his climaxes to more outwardly overwhelming effect. If the single item of melodic inspiration be omitted, it might well be proclaimed that Puccini has here reached his apotheosis. In his polyphonic writing for the choruses in particular, the composer showed a mastery he perhaps never attained before, while his economy of means and his certainty of touch were alike extraordinary. In the music, moreover, there is a gorgeousness of color which often blinded one to the essential emptiness underneath. And yet once this initial effect had departed, an effect heightened by the superb scenic investiture given the opera by Mr. Urban, by the magnificent handling of the stage by Mr. von Wymetal, by the admirable singing of the chorus, and the effective work of the principal artists, what remained was precisely this—an utter emptiness.

In Manon Lescaut and Bohème, Puccini probably said all he really had to say. These two works bore the stamp of a strikingly individual talent. Then followed Tosca and Butterfly, and in these there was a masterful reworking of the melodic materials which had gone before. With The Girl of the Golden West, the decline had become patent, and the three short operas which followed showed only a slight return to the old creative fire. It then became evident that the miracle worked by Verdi, who with each new group of operas discovered for himself a new soul, was not to be looked for in his successor. The true Puccini remained the youthful Puccini. His Bohème, unlike Verdi's Traviata, was to be succeeded by no Aida or Otello or Falstaff. The younger man had in his early work drained the cup of his genius to the bottom, and his was to be no ever-renewing flagon.

What is the reason for Puccini's failure to sustain his youthful creative vigor? Is it not that the man's genius was purely instinctive, that his intellect never equaled his emotions? Youth writes it knows not why nor how, but the mature man needs to turn to a conscious internal spirit which the flame of his youth must feed, but which must guide his way into other, deeper paths.

And Puccini, strive as he might, never could reach beyond his first instinctive outbursts. His true music was and will ever remain the expression of youthful passion, a passion charged with the pathos of inexperience, fresh, sincere, spontaneous. For this the world will ever be his debtor. Turandot, despite the masterly conducting of Mr. Serafin, the admirable impersonations of Mme. Jeritza, Mr. De Luca, and Mr. Bada, the stentorian singing of Mr. Lauri-Volpi, is but another in that long list of Italian operas, effective for awhile, and then forgotten. It is the Puccini of Bohème who will remain.

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COMMUNICATIONS

THE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE LAW

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor:—The recent decree of an ecclesiastical court that a marriage between two well-known people was never valid raises again the extraordinary difficulty of getting people to understand either quite definite regulations or even a customary use of words.

The Catholic Church has a body of law for its own members. That body of law is administered, as is all law, by experts; by judges and courts. It is subject, in its application, to the same rules of evidence as govern civil courts. In this body of law, regulations governing marriage between Catholics, and between Catholics and others find place.

It is definitely laid down, as it is in other bodies of law, what constitutes impediment to marriage, including certain legal defects by reason of which a marriage ceremony is without effect; is null and void. There are rules known to all business men governing the validity of contracts; the Catholic marriage law is no more abstruse than these.

A decree or declaration by a competent court that conditions essential to valid marriage have not been fulfilled—that such marriage is in fact null and void, is called a decree of annulment. It is notable that every time that term is used it causes confusion, not only among Protestants, but among a disconcertingly large number of Catholics as well.

The marriage law is clear. Its application depends upon evidence. One may judge that in this particular case the supporting evidence was also clear since a competent court passed upon it and a reviewing court confirmed the sentence.

Dissatisfaction with this sentence or decree is expressed by various persons who could not enter into the case except, perhaps, as witnesses. It would seem that if they are competent witnesses their adverse evidence should be offered to the court, rather than to the newspapers. One is tempted to guess, however, that the dissatisfaction with this decree lies really in what is assumed to be a review by one church of the act of another. It would be well to get quite clearly the fact that this is a matter, not of religion, not of one church claiming superiority over another, or even greater vigilance, but simply of law, and of evidence presumably not available when the reviewed act was performed.

It is not at all necessary to assume as cause of dissatisfaction with the decree, some latent resentment that the Catholic Church should have a body of law. That would not be quite worthy of those who are expressing dissent with the finding.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

SLOVAKS A RACIAL MINORITY?

Pittsburgh, Pa.

TO the Editor:—On page 62 of The Commonweal of November 24, a paragraph is published dealing with the problem of racial minorities in southeastern Europe. Permit me to correct what I consider a few misconceptions of facts. The Slovaks in the Czecho-Slovakian republic are not a racial minority in any sense that this word implies, but a component part of the predominant element. Both Czechs and Slovaks were instrumental in the establishment of the Czecho-Slovakian republic which only either poorly informed people or those maliciously inclined toward this new state formation would consider an experiment. If experiment it be, it shows wonderful signs of self-sustaining ability and as such is fully entitled to be looked upon as a permanent creation.

While there is at the present time a serious misunderstanding as to the recognition by the Czecho-Slovakian government over the validity of the Pittsburgh compact, nothing is further from the minds of even the most resolute autonomists than separation from the mother republic for which both Czechs and Slovaks have made great sacrifices.

The statement attributed to Monsignor Hlinka—"While we are unable to either refute or affirm it"—is so contrary to the statements made before large assemblies of American Slovaks that I am not running any great risk in doubting its correctness.

The only Slovaks who claim separation from the mother body and either incorporation into another, alien formation or "splendid isolation," belong to that type which before the war had been the underlings of Hungary's decadent aristocracy.

J. J. KONUŠ.

CONDITIONS IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor:—As a regular reader of your review, I have often been impressed by the rather unfriendly tendency of news and articles you are publishing about Czecho-Slovakia. If I have not reacted earlier to them my reason has been that I hoped that the progressive consolidation would be the best argument to contradict the statements appearing in your review.

But in your issue of Wednesday, November 24, 1926, there appears on page 62 an article concerning President Masaryk's attitude toward the Pittsburgh Agreement, and Monsignor Hlinka's parting words to his American friends, which are, I assume, not correctly reproduced and interpreted. The article in question is full of so many misinterpretations and incorrect statements that I cannot restrain myself from contradicting them plainly, bringing at the same time to your knowledge the following facts:

The President's attitude toward the Pittsburgh Agreement is given by the Constitution of the Czecho-Slovakian republic adopted unanimously by all legal representatives of the Czecho-Slovakian nation in Parliament. As to Monsignor Hlinka's words, it is a real pleasure for me to inform you that the Slovakian Popular party, the head and leader of which Monsignor Hlinka is, has just entered into the Czecho-Slovakian government and is represented there by two ministers. This sign of active coöperation seems to me the best contradiction of Monsignor Hlinka's alleged words.

I hope that you will not mind my critical attitude toward an article published in your review and I shall certainly appreciate it if in the future, you will verify the truth of articles about Czecho-Slovakia before publishing them. The interests of your magazine are quite comprehensible to me as I have been for a long time in touch with the Catholic party in my country. I shall be glad to be at your service at any time and furnish you with any authentic material concerning the present political and religious conditions in Czecho-Slovakia.

PEREGRIN FIŠA.
Secretary of the Czecho-Slovakian Legation.

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POEMS

Questions on a Nun's Habit

You do not think it is because I do not share
A woman's subtle weakness for the piquancy of dress—
Its swift, sure coquetry, its studied carelessness—
That I wear what I wear?
You do not think it is because I do not dare
Its recklessness?
What do you say
Of wearing one's bridal gown
To town—
To church on Good Friday?
Of wearing one's shroud
Every day, all day,
In the heat and the crowd,
On Easter and Christmas day?
You do not say I have bad taste
Or none at all, or that I am less than fastidious and proud.
Is it because you do not wish to waste
Words upon one whose world in secret you deplore?
You are not sorry for me.
You do not think me dressed quite unbecomingly?
(You would give much to be attired so adequately?)
Of all the dozen gowns I ever wore
And have abandoned, orchid and shadow-grey and powder-blue,
This is the only one that you need envy me—
You have not ever cared to find me beautiful before,
Have you?

SISTER M. MADELEVA.

A Well in Gobi

A well in Gobi—
Rain after a long dry season—
Unexpected, but appreciated.

A breeze above the brook—
Autumn moonlight, quiescent—
On the green leaves, the reflected beams of the sunset.
Ah, could I but retain moments so transient
If but for so long that I might be their companion?

Human steps sounding in an empty vale—
Home things found in a stranger land—
I know them not,
But how intimate they appear to me!

KWEI CHEN.

Recalled

The loveliest one in the gardens of Paradise
Casually said,
With an indifferent lift
Of her shingled head,
"The world? Oh, yes—that's the place
Where I used to dance
Before I was dead."

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.

The Mad Lover

He was lovelier than the white birch
The wind holds
Against the sky . . .
But now,
Since His death,
His body is warm
And fragrant as the body of a cherry tree.

They say, my love,
The bark of pomegranates has grazed your cheek—
But tell me
Why have your hands and feet a deeper dye?

The wine presses are running
While the song lifts of those who tread out the vintage. . .
And your feet
Are as red as wine . . . or blood.

Wearing a casque of silver
And helmet of beaten gold,
The moon walked last night between
two slim young pine trees . . .
Like Pharaoh's daughter.

All night long
She wandered among the reeds,
Searching, searching something
That had been lost . . .

SPEER STRAHAN.

Versailles

Shadows long and grey are here,
Dimming the halls,
The marble walls
That always had been dark with fear;
Not fear of God though, fear of man
Whose heart was black, and rough, and galled
With treason, lust, and royalty.
But now, a soft and soothing calm
Like the chanting of a psalm
On a venerate brother's breath,
Lies in the halls—
The marble walls,
That tended royal life and death.
For God is here now, quietly.

NORBERT ENGELS.

Surrender

Wings that are beaten in vain
What do you think to gain
From this bitter jest, but a bleeding breast
For your pain?

Say, "These are beautiful bars,
Here I am safe from the scars
Of the sharp unrest and the endless quest
Of the stars."

MEDORA C. ADDISON.

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THE PLAY

By R. DANA SKINNER

Up the Line

PRIZE plays suffer the initial handicap of increasing the critical mood of an audience. When associated with the drama class of a college, matters become worse. One looks for academic niceties and tries to detect the odors of the laboratory. This is all grossly unfair to the playwright and to the producer. There is nothing about Up the Line, the new Harvard prize play produced by Richard Herndon, which smacks either of laboratory or academic halls. It is a play obviously drawn from the soil and from first-hand observation, and if it lacks certain elements which go toward establishing true emotional power, the fault lies in the idea of the play itself and in a treatment quite as common this season among the experienced Broadway writers as among collegiate dramatists.

Henry Fisk Carlton is the author of this North Dakota study, and if I am not misinformed, he has worked in those regions, has gone "up the line" from job to job with harvesting crews, and thus completely earned the right to tell us what that kind of life does to character, male and female. You have here one of those great wheat ranches where the "hired girl" must inevitably marry the "hired man," and where, thanks to a benevolent owner, they have a chance in time to buy a section of the ranch and thus tie themselves forever to the interminable and treeless soil. The action of the present play all takes place in the mess shack of a ranch house where Effie and her mother live and look after the appetities of the steady hands. According to tradition, Effie should marry Nels, the Scandinavian hired man. But Effie is afflicted with the wanderlust, the desire to see trees and mountains and great cities. The thought of staying forever on the ranch has become intolerable. Into this situation comes a group of I. W. W. harvester hands, headed by Slug, a tall and handsome animal, to whom more than four days in one place is an absurdity. Effie hears him talk of Alaska, the northern lumber camps, great cities. He becomes the incarnation of her own longings. By contrary instinct, Slug gets from her his first desire to settle down. They marry.

A year later, once more at harvest time, Slug has become restless. Some of his old friends come up the line. They taunt him with yielding "to a skirt." They need his leadership in an approaching battle with the Fargo police. Effie tries to tell him that she is going to have a baby, but her courage fails her when she sees what it means to him to be off again. She lets him go to Fargo. He promises to return in a week. He does, in fact, come back, but not for eight years. In that time, no word has come of him. He is legally dead, and Effie has married Nels. There is a moment when he is ready to fight for the chance to stay with his child. Then, beaten by himself in his one chance for happiness, he goes off again, once more on his endless march "up the line."

There is undoubtedly material here for a stirring play. Wanderlust is one of the great universal themes of drama and literature. But Mr. Carlton has not used his material well for dramatic purposes. The play lacks a point of view. It is neither Effie's play nor Slug's. Nor does it center with enough dramatic intensity about the struggle between them. The real cause for Effie's allowing him to go to Fargo without telling him about their baby is barely hinted at. She is not, as several critics indicated, merely afraid to tell him. She is afraid, on the contrary, to put in his way the same obstacle which has always tied her down to one spot. She cannot kill in him the instinct she is trying to keep alive in herself. There, I take it, is the central point of the play, the struggle between two overmastering human instincts—home and the road of adventure. But either through an attempt to be oversubtle, or through failure to realize just what he is writing about, Mr. Carlton passes over this struggle with a light and colorless touch. It becomes just another aspect of a long story, instead of the dramatic climax to a single great issue. And you are left to guess at Effie's real motive. It is not stated. And unfortunately, what is not stated on the stage generally escapes notice.

Thus the weakness of the play is its lack of a well-developed central idea, to which all minor defects in treatment can be traced. The last act becomes meaningless. What might have implied tragedy becomes merely sentimental pathos. And the occasional blasphemies are merely pale and mistaken attempts to shock an audience into interest which only real drama could command. There are plenty of good scenes in the play. There is plenty of natural and effective dialogue, and plenty of amusing characterization. But there is nothing to hold it all together or to give it emotional stir. It is worth pointing out these defects to forestall the trite post mortem that "here is another good play which could not succeed with the modern public." It is simply not a good play.

The acting of the play is, for the most part, of high order, allowing for distinctly mediocre direction. Florence Johns as Effie makes the most of her underwritten part. Louis Calhern as the wandering Slug does by far his best work of several seasons. He has somehow brought his rangy proportions into a compact and forceful being, with no little glamour, in the first two acts, contrasting with the broken-down prodigal of the last act. Only the acting of Lydia Willmore as the paralyzed mother of the first act tends to throw the play off key. Her hysterical invectives against everyone and everything are vastly overdone.

The Squall

THE first production of the season of Messrs. Jones and Green is a modern drama of rural Spain by Jean Bart in which more time and talent have been wasted upon purely mediocre material than in most of the plays that reach Broadway. Its author, one guesses, was torn between writing a serious play of what faith and prayer can accomplish in straightening out a domestic mess and a play that would follow the box-office formulae of Aloma, White Cargo, and similar pictures of civilized man encountering primitive females. The result, when it is not ludicrous or cheaply melodramatic, is drab, in spite of Lionel Atwill's direction, and the heroic efforts made by such actors as Blanche Yurka, Mary Fowler, and Lee Baker.

In its simplest terms, we have a Spanish household where all has gone well for twenty years, in spite of the fact that Jose Mendez, in giving up his art to marry a woman of peasant origin and to work on a farm, has had to suppress a power-

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ful creative instinct in his life. But he has found in his wife, Dolores, a human sympathy and understanding which have largely made up for his loss. His son is an excellent student, his farm has prospered. He has reason, like Job, to be pleased. Then, during a storm, a gypsy girl, Nubi, takes refuge in his house from the cruelties of her master. Against her better instincts, Dolores offers the girl shelter and a home in exchange for work.

But Nubi, who is quite without moral sense, proceeds to exert her charms on father, son, and hired man. The father begins to paint again, using Nubi as his model. The son neglects his studies and his fiancée. Dolores discovers what is going on, but realizes that to drive Nubi out would merely make the girl appear a victim of jealousy. In an agony, Dolores prays to the Mother of God for help. It comes at the most crucial moment in the form of the gypsy chief, who has heard from Nubi's discarded lover, the hired man, where she is. In the end, the Mendez household awakes, and the healing of the scars begins.

The theme itself might have brought forth a powerful play. In fact, the spectacle of any kind of religious faith as a dramatic motive is rare enough to deserve a welcome. But there is an essential crudity and cheapness in the handling of the plot and action which deprive the story of its value. Nubi is one of those characters who speaks broken English and always talks of herself in the third person. There is no artistic restraint in the handling of her scenes with father or son. Their sensual side is played beyond all good taste on the standard box-office principle. All the subtlety and fineness which has gone into the writing of Dolores's part disappears when Nubi is on the stage. The play then becomes nothing but cheap sex melodrama, crowding out what beauty or sincerity there might have been.

The sincere and poignant acting of Blanche Yurka as Dolores does all that is possible to redeem the play. But it is not a part that brings out her best possibilities. Mr. Atwill's direction seems to lack vibrancy, although he too has done much with conflicting material. Mary Fowler in a small part is singularly effective. The Nubi of Miss Caubet is played as written, and without any redeeming primitiveness. Mr. Baker as the father is good only in his scenes with Dolores. The mounting of the play is excellent. It is unfortunate that so much that might be good in theme, and so much that is good in acting, should find so second-rate an outlet in tawdry playwriting and the attempt to tickle a jaded popular taste.

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BOOKS

Social Theories of the Middle Ages: 1200-1500, *by Bede Jarrett. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company. $4.00.*

DOM JARRETT, in a modest introduction, calls the attention of readers to the difficulties involved in the composition of his book. And indeed one marvels constantly at the wealth of information amassed and concentrated, and marvels also that modern scholarship should have been able finally to effect the detailed reconstruction of mediaeval circumstance without which the historian of thought would be limited to guessing, sometimes to guessing badly. The first thing to say about Dom Jarrett's book, therefore, is that by comparison with earlier treatises on mediaeval ideas of society, property and law, it appears factual, discriminating and critical. It is not an apology for or an anathema of the thirteenth century. It is simply a thorough, eminently readable presentation of what the thirteenth and the two following centuries thought about the temporal welfare of man.

The mediaeval concept of law crystallized into the dictum of Saint Thomas that "law is something rational, relating to the common good, promulgated by that competent authority who has the care of the community." Prior to this pronouncement and afterward as well, there was, however, a great deal of discussion which our author summarizes briefly. The subject is of such difficulty that the chapter allotted can serve only as an introduction, in which the theme of royal power is developed most amply. Sections on slavery, property, and money-making are admirably lucid and terse. Here is clearly shown—more clearly, I believe, than anywhere else in English—the Thomistic conviction that the institution of private property is lawful but "not a moral necessity arising from the absolute nature of man." Very illuminating also are the passages discussing the mediaeval idea of land as common property, title to which was guaranteed by service; slavery as a condition accepted, in true Aristotelian spirit, because imposed by the diversity of human natures, but not allowed to interfere with liberty of conscience or equality before God; usury as practice that grew out of the nature of money but was permissible only under certain conditions. Since these points are most frequently insisted upon by economic controversialists—erroneously, it too often happens—the skill with which Dom Jarrett has set them forth ought to be widely admired. Naturally the brevity of this treatise precludes the full development of individual problems. For instance, I feel that not enough attention is paid to the influence of what may be termed the "social teachings" of Christ. The fact that the scholastics were so deeply indebted to Greek thinkers certainly does not preclude their constant reliance upon patristic teaching. It is interesting at this point to compare the German scholar, Otto Schilling's sober but clarifying little treatise on The Christian Social Teachings. Here the emphasis is entirely upon the Gospels as understood by religious reason.

Dom Jarrett's comprehensive view takes in also such matters as education and the position of woman. A modern reader, inured to the idea that his is the first age of pedagogy, will very likely stare in amazement at the theories formed by Rober de Sorbonne and Mafeo Vegio. Woman was, of course, judged divergently by the monk to whom she meant very frequently a temptation, and the courtly poet who compared her with a great variety of flowers and precious stones. Dom Jarrett himself grows a little impatient with Saint Thomas for being altogether too reasonable in the matter and arguing as if mothers were propositions. Indeed he seems to find great comfort (and no doubt the reader will join him) in Pierre du Bois and his De Recuperatione Sancte Terre. Though mediaeval damsels were frequently quite as difficult to manage as their modern counterparts, they really caused less trouble to the philosopher than their endlessly belligerent husbands and brothers. The ethics of war, our author shows, had been so carefully thought out that there is little we can add now excepting experience.

The whole book is a succession of pages all so interesting and so instructive that it is hard to choose between them. A time which like the present listens to so much, deep black or radiant red as the poets refer, about mediaevalism, ought to give the book a wide and enthusiastic hearing. Dom Jarrett writes always as a scrupulous historian, conscious of the mingled facts in the story but in love with its beauty none the less. He bears in mind, as we all do, that the middle-ages had found not only an explanation of man, but also a noble and beautiful explanation. The following lines from the section devoted to Christendom put the matter very well:

"For the people of that time religion or the Faith ran through the whole of life, in the sense of being inextricably entangled with it. The teaching of Christian tradition was not always lived up to nor ever lived up to perfectly, but the Church as the institution which in their eyes had been given them to be the living embodiment of that teaching could never wholly be put out of their lives. In the village, the church as a building was the centre of the village life, round it and in it moved the important events of life, individual and communal. However much the mediaeval preacher might inveigh against the evils of men's lives, and however distressingly he might lament the ignorance and superstitution of so many even of his audience, he could not but be conscious that life nevertheless was lived in surroundings that forever bore witness to the Faith."

T. C.

Fallodon Papers, by Viscount Grey of Fallodon, K.G. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50.

NO POLITICAL figure associated with the great war is so familiar to American readers as Sir Edward Grey, now Viscount Grey of Fallodon. Through the Page letters we were brought into intimate contact with the man at the very moment when an unforeseen crisis, which one can well believe he would have given ten years of his life to avert, tried his character as with fire. Page's admiration for the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, touching as it did upon hero-worship, was, we feel, justified in the main, however poor the service it did his functions as representative of a great neutral power. Fallodon Papers, a collection of lectures delivered by Lord Grey since his retirement from active politics, reinforces the impression we had received of a man naturally generous, a little aloof, liberal both by temperament and tradition and, like nearly all naturalists, master of a singularly lucid and unpretentious style.

The little book is all the more deserving because, in an age where there is a growing tendency not only to contemn pleasures that cost no money, but to debar others from them by the sheer change the contemporary pleasure-seeker has set to the tempo of life, the recreations Lord Grey proposes for our attention are those which wealth, in America at least, has not yet preëmpted. Reading, tramping, fly-fishing, the observation of bird-life, have not yet been put out of any man's reach,

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certainly not in a country where it might be said the wilderness persists at the doors of our biggest cities. The business of gaining a living is an absorbing one. But it is not so great a foe to leisure or pleasure that mental or physical concentration cannot profit by spare days and week-ends. It will help us to learn the lesson Viscount Grey seems to wish to teach, if we remember that many of his own observations were made during odd days that were snatched from terribly hard and anxious work, with bad health and failing sight to contend with to boot.

The British statesman, we can easily imagine, looks upon motoring and the general craze for speed and movement as a deadly enemy to reading. "Railways," he says, "have altered people's habits by making them move about much more. But railways have this compensating advantage—that, although they take people much away from home, a long railway journey affords a first-rate opportunity for reading. But . . . the motor car is altogether unfavorable to reading. People consume more time in moving about than they did, and they consume it under conditions which, even for people with good eyes, must make reading difficult, if not impossible." Lord Grey does not believe in "browsing." He would have the reader make up his mind before he enters a library just what he seeks. "If we have not thought to ourselves and determined on some book which we wish to read, when the opportunity comes the greater part of the time may be lost in the difficulty of making a choice."

Lord Grey's Thoughts on Public Life go neither as far nor as deep as we have grown used to expecting from political thinkers, and his devotion to Earl Grey, that very conservative champion of parliamentary reform ninety-five years ago, must be attributed in part to family loyalty. Perhaps the most interesting part of his book, which is filled with keen and loving observation of fur, fin and feather, is an account of a tramp taken by him in company with Colonel Roosevelt in 1910 through the New Forest district, and the revelation received by him then of the American President's all-embracing knowledge and enthusiasm. The pair unexpectedly ran into a flooded road, and Lord Grey's comment that "I think there was some magnetism about Colonel Roosevelt's personality which created incidents," does justice to his discernment.

The charm of this little collection of essays upon life's alleviations is greatly enhanced by its rich decorations in wood-block from the hand of Robert Gibbings.

HENRY LONGAN STUART.

Contemporary Russian Literature: 1881-1925, by D. S. Mirsky. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $4.00.

PRINCE MIRSKY begins his projected history of Russian literature with what should be the final volume—contemporary writers. It is not that he is laboring under the mistaken idea that his Anglo-Saxon readers will already be well-versed in the Russian classics. He has no illusions on that point. "After all, in England and America," he writes, "it is only a few intellectuals who are interested in Russian literature," and he admits that these few are sadly handicapped. The number who can read the original Russian is negligible. Translations are chiefly in French or German. Those in English are few and, for the most part, poorly done. He complains that even the scanty number who have scraped acquaintance, through translations and anthologies, with a few leading authors are at least twenty years behind the time in appreciation of these writers. Even twenty years ago, he as-

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sures us, it was only the less cultured Russians who would have shared their preferences.

After this snub to Anglo-Saxon would-be intellectuals, Prince Mirsky makes no attempt to repair their errors and ignorances. The gates of the golden age are closed at the death of Dostoievsky in 1881, the retirement of Leo Tolstoy from the arena of letters, and Turgenev's death in 1883. With all our imperfections on our head we are jumped at once with both feet into the mediocrity and confusion of mind prevalent in the Russia of this generation.

It is well to be up to date. But, if we merely learn what is of today, are we really "up" to date? Should we not have come up through the preceding centuries of the sowing, the first tender growths, the development, and full blooming? How otherwise can we compare and value? If we know nothing of the folk-lore and fables, the historic legends and religious writings from the tenth to the sixteenth centuries, literary forms so dear to the mature Tolstoy; if we scarcely know more than the names of the great eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets, historians, novelists, dramatists, and publicists; of Gogol and Pushkin, Lomonosov and Lermontov, Karamzin, Aksakoff, the three Soloviovs, Dostoievsky, Uspensky and Fet, Katkov, Mestchersky, Suvorin, Alexei Tolstoy, Chekhov, Nekrasov, and others of that golden age, how are we prepared to weigh and give true appreciation to those who come after?

Prince Mirsky frankly denominates his volume "a Baedeker," "a guide-book." The alluring and illuminating paths of the anthology are not for him. His is a critical review of the history, politics, theories, philosophies, and changing states of mind of the Russian writers of today, as they influence their literary output. But of their writings we are given no illustrations. We have no way of forming a judgment for ourselves, nor is it a method that inspires us to go adventuring for first-hand knowledge. The quality of new writers seems to be enormous, we cannot see the forest for the trees. We find ourselves longing for the pleasant and picturesque, if superficial, bird's-eye views and copious illustrations of an anthology like that of Leo Wiener. But Prince Mirsky is not to be deflected from the straight and narrow ways of the critic. He has a duty. It is "to modify the hasty conclusions arrived at by Anglo-Saxons, and others, on the subject of my country. It has become a tradition," he continues sarcastically—and we must admit, truthfully—"for the omniscient geniuses of the West, to exercise their intuitive powers on the subject of Russia where they can move freely, unhampered by excess of information." The great thing, the immediate pressing necessity for the western intellectual is to know that the few modern names we have somehow familiarized ourselves with—Merezhkovsky, Artsybashev, Balmont, Andreev and Gorky, are not as important as we fancy (for which we thank heaven!) and that prominence should rather be given to such personages as Leontiev, Rozanov, Remizov, to Bialy and the symbolists.

For those of us who may have a passable reading knowledge of the Russian language, and who for sheer love of it, have devoured even the reviews and magazines so dear to the older Russians of imperial days—no more informing, thorough and illuminating guide-book can be used than this volume of Prince Mirsky's, for further adventures on little traveled routes. Yet, after all, to us the clearest and most interesting chapters of the book are those opening ones, devoted to the few survivors of the great age whose literary activities extended into our era—the aged Tolstoy, the aging Chekhov, the ever-youthful Lieskov.

HENRIETTA DANA SKINNER.

Plato's American Republic, by Douglas Woodruff. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $1.00.

MR. WOODRUFF, after having twice visited this country as a member of the Oxford University debating team, has ventured to set down some of his views, which he conveys by a very clever use of the Socratic dialogue. The device is specially handy because the Americans can be compared, not with the English, who indeed come in for a few incidental hard knocks, but with the "Athenians."

Through the mouth of Socrates, who has returned from a lecture tour in America, and who tells of his experiences to his friends Agathon, Lysis and Phaelon, Mr. Woodruff castigates the "barbarians." He is not malicious; indeed he obviously likes Americans—and what Englishman who has come to know them could fail to like them?—but his method and the limits of a very small book rarely offer opportunity for anything but the pointing out, with a frequent exaggeration, of American faults. As an example of a characteristic mingling of wisdom with a wise-crack take the following:

"There is an island there called Ellis Island, the abode of the rejected of America, where I also spent two days. Many emigrants think that they are emigrating to the United States when in fact they are emigrating to Ellis Island, which is not a land of opportunity at all. So there crowd on Ellis Island the wretched people whom America will not accept. Among the figures in that part of the harbor there was one that at once held my attention because she was so much greater and nobler than the rest. But she was not allowed on the mainland. Going close to her I saw that it was Liberty herself. She also was classed as undesirable." It is the fashion for visiting Englishmen to make such jests. Even Mr. Chesterton said that the Statue of Liberty winked at him. The temptation to such facile facetiousness is great, and Mr. Woodruff has yielded to it rather too often. But there are many penetrating things said in his diverting and brilliant little book, though its general effect, owing to its one-sidedness, will probably be to irritate Americans and mislead his own countrymen.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

Selected Poems of Edith M. Thomas, edited with a memoir by Jessie B. Rittenhouse. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.00.

EDITH M. THOMAS is known to the general public as a one-poem poet. Whether one regrets this depends on the point of view. Frost Tonight is deservedly familiar to all who love loveliness, but is often the only selection of her work given in anthologies. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century in this country, however, she was a much admired figure, and her death last year calls for an estimate of certain elements in her now completed work which are more than transient.

Miss Thomas was always a favorite of those with fastidious taste. In the present selection of her poems, made by the accomplished Miss Rittenhouse, there is found an intense though somewhat stark spirit, at its best of fine intellectual and philosophical cast, touched very often with chaste beauty, and chiseled into lyrics of almost uniformly flawless taste. The inevitable comparison is with Lizette Woodworth Reese, and certainly these two poets, so nearly contemporary, represent the best American achievement, by women, in what may be termed the school of restraint. Emily Dickinson stands by herself.

Trained in love of the classics, Miss Thomas adapted the

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sterner of their concepts with a clear vigor in which her New England ancestry is traceable, and which is in one form or another the dominant note in her work. Thus she quotes Socrates: "And, know thou, the voice of the laws is to me as the flutes of the god."

But this sterness of mood, though characteristic in Miss Thomas, is not unrelieved:

> "Step lightly across the floor,
> And somewhat more tender be."

So she addresses a lover in her own imagined death. And speaking as The Quiet Pilgrim, moved by grief to gentleness: "I shall go softly all my years."

Her feeling for poignant grace and sentiment is extraordinarily good. It is what first won her distinction, and perhaps will prove to be the most enduring part of her.

A third quality of Miss Thomas is her incessant craving for the ideal perfection, the ultimate vision, which the flesh vouchsafes her only in glimpses. In this she is nearest kin to the established great. Her specification of what constitutes those glimpses parallels, too, that of the established poets, and in part carries conviction. Miss Thomas finds beauty in the life mask of Keats, in courage, and in change and sorrow and death. Nature and love, however, she meets rather at second hand, with more grace than telling effect.

No poet is unerringly even in his thought and taste, but Miss Thomas maintains an average of high consistency and power. The issuance of the present volume recalls and establishes her vitality. The book is for the finer lovers of poetry, and by them will be recognized as containing much of permanent excellence.

ROBERT W. MORSE.

Harmer John, by Hugh Walpole. New York: George H. Doran Company. $2.50.

USING the word in the loose sense current nowadays, one may say that mysticism is the dominant feature of this novel. It is the story of a young man, half Swedish, half English, with the noble but amorphous idealisms of both races in his character, who settles in a little cathedral city in that southwestern corner of England where the old Celtic stock of Britain still predominates. From the starting-point of physical fitness and beauty—Hjalmar Johanson is a gymnastic instructor—he tries to put before the townspeople his own ideals of the perfect life and of that beauty which he believes to be at the heart of the universe. He gives his affection to a girl not developed to his own spiritual stature and when the gift is abused devotes himself to the degraded humanity in Polchester's one shameful slum quarter. Finally he meets death at the hands of a violent mob stirred up by unscrupulous vested interests against the "bloody furriner," but his death is really a triumph; he has lost his life that he might gain it, in the scriptural sense.

Whatever the author's intention, one reader's sentiment on coming to the death of Harmer John was, "The pity of it—and the futility!" It is significant that the hero, with his brain "only half awake and only a quarter educated," but with a heart of pure gold, is a compound of England and Sweden, two countries with an unlimited potency for altruistic idealism and lofty vision but whose "mysticism" has been hopelessly at sea since it was cut adrift from the Latin tradition that has alone found the synthesis of authority and individualism, of reality and idealism.

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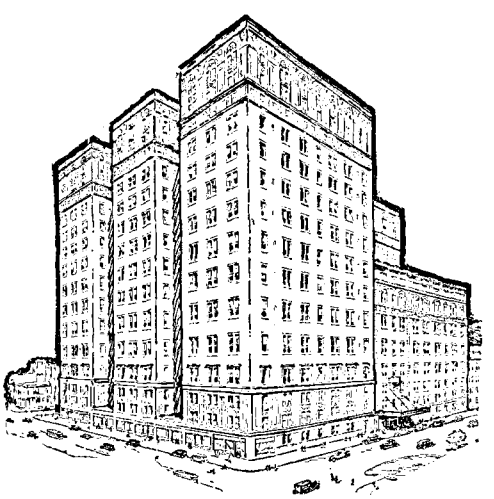

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As always in Mr. Walpole's writings, there is excellent characterization in Harmer John. The hero himself is always lovable, if sometimes irritating: so is his good-hearted clerical friend, Tom Longstaffe. Further, in the case of the villains of the story, the writer has made us feel, with Johanson, that few human beings are wholly bad, that in the most evil as well as the weakest of them, there is some bit of goodness.

GEORGE D. MEADOWS.

Foam, by Mary Dixon Thayer. Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company. $2.00.

NO ONE even casually in touch with Miss Thayer's activities in poetry, devotional writing, journalism, and sports can have the slightest doubt of her versatility. And so no one will be surprised that she has now written an exceedingly readable novel—although it is another matter whether Foam is exactly the sort of novel one might have anticipated from her.

The book is an absolutely photographic and phonographic rendering of a certain slice of "official" Philadelphia society—brought into relation with the larger world by its post-war transitions, and its perpetual guerilla warfare between the young, restless experimentalists and the old conservative traditions. Marriage, divorce, faith, unfaith, all the paradoxes of our paradoxical modern civilization are touched upon: but touched slightly, impressionistically, as part of the never quite tangible or comprehensible pageant in which life itself passes before young Spencer Wade—newly back from the American Expeditionary Forces and trying to adjust himself to a family and a world grown strangely unfamiliar. It is not, in fact, a very vital world, this carefully fenced in little backwater of foam—or is it froth? The story leaves Spencer still groping at its close; and the only character who achieves any sort of solution is the lightly-etched but starry Laura, whose solution is the convent because she is "in love with God."

Following the mode of many recent novels, Miss Thayer tells her story episodically, with no particular finality of plot. She is a keen and sympathetic observer, crystallizing her observations of people with unusual vivacity and of nature with delicate poetry. But the author herself remains more interesting, because more intense, than any of the little group brought together in these pages.

KATHERINE BRÉGY.

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BRIEFER MENTION

You Can't Win, by Jack Black. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.00.

EXCEPT for a bit of sentiment at the beginning, and a few pages toward the end in which he justifies his failure to live up to his early standards, Mr. Black has given us the result of thirty years' experience in the art of living by the hard work of others. Since Mr. Black proved an apostate to his profession, it is only fair to say for him that he was handicapped; fifteen of his thirty years he spent in various penitentiaries. The author makes certain facts stand out clearly: the nervous strain of a criminal career sends a man to dope to find repose, and this, more than any other thing, drags him into the gutter; brutality—the whipping-post, strait-jacket, and third degree—does not reform men, but turns them into beasts seeking revenge; education and kind treatment meet with successful responses; where this fails, the case is pathological and should be treated as such. The author does not attempt to prove these things; his life-story does that. The artless biography wins its merit on the presentation of a type, and one feels that the examples offered in illustration are authentic.

Terry's Guide to Cuba, by T. Philip Terry. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

THIS handy little guide-book to the island of Cuba will be welcomed by many who are planning a southern flight from the gathering chills of winter. The author has divided his work in three parts: the first, an interpretation of general matters like exchange of money, railroads, boats, hotels, restaurants, theatres and festivals; the second, a thorough study of Havana and its environs; the third, details for some twenty special excursions throughout the island. There are maps, lists of current expressions and forms of address and language-hints that will make travel and social intercourse with the natives both pleasurable and profitable. In short, Terry's Guide is a book to be recommended even to fairly well-informed tourists in Cuba, and a work with useful information also for the native of the island, who will learn much of the outlander in carefully considering the amount and quality of the information he is likely to have at his disposal.

The Escape from the Primitive, by Horace Carncross. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

THE author of the present work is a practising psychoanalyst, and psychoanalysts usually write interestingly. In fact, Dr. Carncross has written a serious, dignified, readable book. Acceptance of his conclusions, however, predicates a belief in their premises. He develops in detail a favorite present-day theory: Child Man, trying to escape primitive complexes with which Mother Nature has cursed him, invents Father God, thus inverting creation. Yet no psychoanalyst, by taking thought, has added one cubit to the explanation of the ever-renewed mystery of Christian faith. Many of our own greatest minds, like those of the past, in their hour of spiritual need continue "to fall back childishly upon the parent mysteries of God," rather than upon psychoanalysis. If one believes the sexual impulse of the "ego sense" creative beyond individual existence, "and therefore the core or symbol of all spiritual constructiveness," however, one may escape from the primitive and from the divine at the same time.

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THE QUIET CORNER

I counsel thee, shut not thy heart nor thy library—C. LAMB.

"Ah," said Britannicus, rubbing his hands in satisfaction, "I see that the English newspapers have come in. Thank you, Miss Brynmarian."

"You're welcome," said Miss Brynmarian, with a curious emphasis on the last word.

"You don't seem to think much of English journalism," remarked Britannicus.

"Not so much," confessed Miss Brynmarian.

"You should overcome that prejudice," persuaded Britannicus. "You will profit by doing so. Here, for instance, is a wonderful article which should benefit you greatly. It's in The Spectator, and is written by St. John Ervine."

"What is he Ervining about now?" asked Miss Brynmarian.

"The corruption of the English language in America," replied Britannicus. "A very grave topic!"

"Ready for the grave, if that's what you mean," agreed Miss Brynmarian.

"Come, come," said Britannicus, "let me read you some of his remarks, and I'm sure you will feel that he is justified."

"'"Shoot, if you must, this young bobbed head, but spare my country's tongue," she said,'" paraphrased Miss Brynmarian.

Britannicus regarded his Spectator seriously, and read:

"'When the reader realizes that all of these groups with the exception of Canadians and the Negroes, in America, were born in Europe, and that they often are illiterate and unable to speak English, and that the majority of them, when they speak English at all, speak it indifferently, he will realize why the English language is steadily being debased in America.'"

"I am neither a Canadian nor a Negro," confessed Miss Brynmarian, "but Mr. Ervine makes me feel that I should apologize to him for not being either."

"No, on the contrary, he's very fair," replied Britannicus, "for he bewails the fact that the English themselves are getting very slovenly in their speech."

"Getting?" inquired Miss Brynmarian. "They've been already 'got'—heaven knows how many centuries back. But, being English, they're probably just beginning to realize it."

"Pussy, pussy!" remonstrated Britannicus.

"What else does he say?" inquired Miss Brynmarian.

Britannicus again referred to his paper. "He relates that 'on the first night of a clever and popular comedy now being performed in London, I heard a distinguished English actor say "Yep" in the course of the performance. No one booed! I don't believe that any English actor could have mispronounced "yes" in that vile way before the war and have got away with it. The fact that this player was allowed to say "yep" unchecked by the audience denotes that the danger I fear is present, and if we do not look out we shall presently find our people "yepping" everywhere.'"

"That's a lovely verb," mused Miss Brynmarian. "If you don't like a person, you can 'yep' savagely at him."

"He says that 'yep' is an Americanism for 'yes,'" continued Britannicus.

"Well, the English say 'right,' and the Americans say 'yep'; and I leave it to you which is nearer the correct 'yes,'" said Miss Brynmarian.

"Mr. Ervine doesn't cover that point," remarked Britan-

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nicus, "but he does say that 'the English language, as we know it, is not the English language as millions of Americans know it, and we have also to recognize the danger in which our language now stands because of the increasing intercourse between England and the United States.'"

"Danger?" sniffed Miss Brynmarian. "What about the worse danger Americans face through this same intercourse? Think of the danger of the possible pollution of our spelling of proper names."

Miss Brynmarian rummaged through a pile of papers on her desk. "For instance, I recently came across a yellowed manuscript, left long ago in this library by someone, but I don't know who, for there is no name upon it. However, I'm sure it was an American, for no Englishman (pardon me, Britannicus—I know you are English, and I also am a great admirer of your writing) but no Englishman could have written these verses displaying so well the ridiculousness of English spelling—or English pronunciation—whichever way you look at it."

"Really?" inquired Britannicus. "Read them to me."

And Miss Brynmarian began to declaim:

"'A sad sight is Christabel Cholmondeley, [Chumley]
Whose face is a long way off colmondeley;
Not only her nose
Is as red as a rose,
But her eyes squint and goggle most rolmondeley.

When you're "smart" like the Bellamy-Bohuns, [Boons]
And have crests on your forks and your spohuns,
You may eat with your knife,
Shoot bread pills at your wife,
And even take hat-pins to prohuns.

On the whole, we like Ffoliot Ffolkes, [Fokes]
But excuse him from telling us jjolkes;
He has now held the floor
For ten minutes or more,
And is reaching the point where he ccholkes.

An impressionist painter called Strachan, [Strawn]
Said: "Watch how this picture is drachan;
I make two streaks of green,
Shove my fist through the screen,
And entitle it: "Cow on a lachan."

Once popular, Jocelyn Jacques, [Jakes]
Has lost friends through his dinner-time bracques;
That lunch-counter clutch
Has got him in dutch,
And you hear every spoonful he tacques.'

"There!" exclaimed Miss Brynmarian. "These show you what a terrible thing for America it would be if we began spelling our surnames in the English fashion. You must agree with me that no Englishman could have been the author of these clever lines. Now I wonder who wrote them?"

"I did," announced Britannicus triumphantly.

—THE LIBRARIAN.

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